He Was a Brave and Gallant Gentleman

"RUBY ROBERT"

ALIAS BOB FITZSIMMONS

BY

ROBERT H. DAVIS

With an Introduction

By

W. O. McGEEHAN

SPORTS EDITOR OF "THE NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE"

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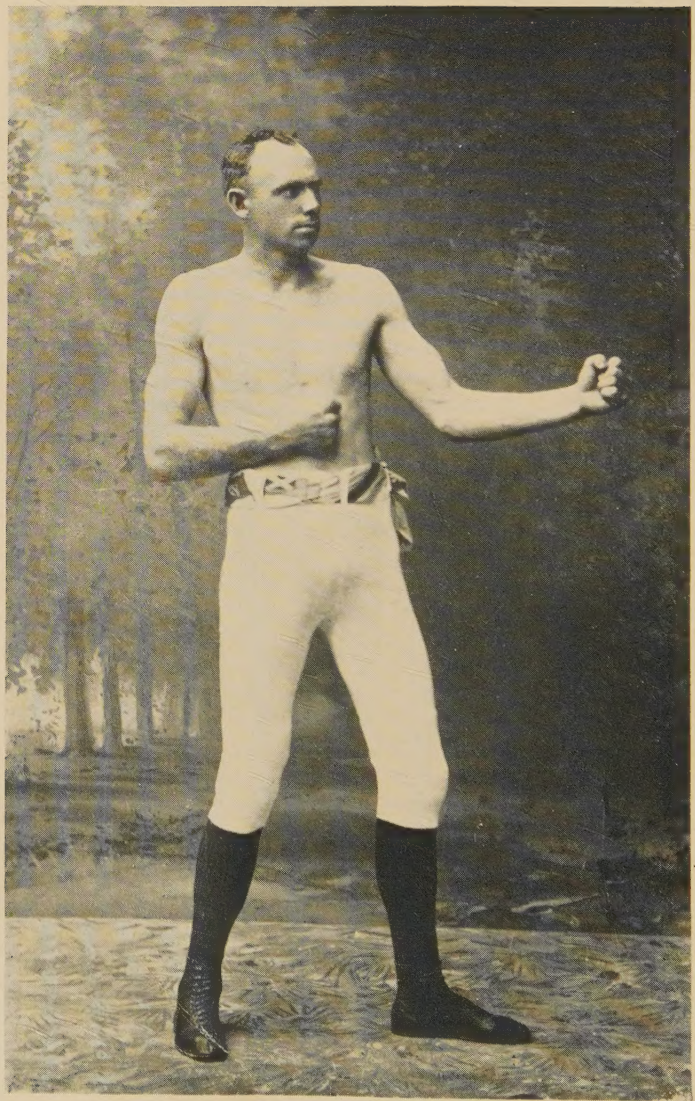

From the Albert Davis Collection

Fitzsimmons at the time he defeated Jack Dempsey, the Nonpareil, in New Orleans. That fight made him the sensation of the American prize ring and the reigning pugilist until after a long series of victories in the middle, light-heavy and heavy-weight class he bowed to Jeffries at Coney Island.

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Illustrated

NEW YORK
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"RUBY ROBERT" ALIAS BOB FITZSIMMONS

—B—
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dedicated

to

THE MEMORY OF

HENRY PEARCE

[1777-1809].

Scientifically Denominated the

GAME CHICKEN,

the BROUGHTON of his time,

And one of the *most heroic* and *humane champions* of England who not only added fresh laurels to the title but never lost that distinguished appellation until it was wrested from him by the

GRIM CONQUEROR OF CONQUERORS.

INTRODUCTION

THIS is a story of the days before romance left the prize ring and it became the cauliflower industry, the records of which must be written on the cash register or the adding machine. I maintain that "Ruby Robert" of whom Mr. Davis writes, was the last romantic ringman and that with his passing the squared circle became cluttered up with business men.

It is strange that the prize ring, from the late lamented Mr. Figg to the present heavyweight champion, has developed no literature whatsoever. There is no true picture anywhere of even one of the long dynasty of heavyweight champions from the dark days of the London Prize Ring Rules to William Harrison Dempsey. Much has been written of the late John L. Sullivan, but Sullivan wore a scowling mask that seems to have baffled his biographers. To know and to understand a true gladiator one must speak with equal ease the language of the demigods and the cauliflowers.

It is this that makes the story of "Ruby

Robert" about the only important literature concerning the prize ring. Bob Davis fortunately understands both of the tongues necessary for a study of the quaintest character ever known to the prize ring of any age. Also Mr. Davis is a great reporter full of sympathy and understanding.

To some the current heavyweight champion is a dull dumb brute. To the majority he is a hero endowed with all of the manly virtues and kind to his aged parents, if any. When champions pass they become legends or, as Mr. Kipling has said, solar myths. It was thus with John L. Sullivan and his predecessors; but Robert H. Davis has kept a record of "Ruby Robert," the man, and has written it so that all who read will know one prize fighter for what he really was.

I am considering this as an historical document first. From this point of view it is of no small importance. The circulation manager of any newspaper will tell you that there is no story in the world that causes as much commotion as a heavyweight championship prize fight. Therefore the story of "Ruby Robert" is history, and to my mind the most faithful bit of

history ever written around the ring. It seems to retain its glamor despite the tinkle of the cash register and the click of the adding machine.

As to its appeal as a bit of sheer entertainment, I will leave that to the reader. Good reporting always is good entertainment when the subject matter has anything to justify it. "Ruby Robert," having been the strangest character in a glamorous game, is a subject worthy of the writing.

Assigned by his editor to the task of Boswelling Ruby Robert—just prior to and immediately after the celebrated Battle of the Carson Valley, where Ruby Robert tore the mantle of John L. Sullivan from the shoulders of James J. Corbett after laying him low with that solar plexus punch—Mr. Davis showed himself a reporter with a conscience. He actually questioned Fitzsimmons before he quoted him.

If there are any readers who are so naïve as to say, "Naturally," I will explain. A few years ago I sat at the ringside when Mr. William Harrison Dempsey finally battered down Señor Luis Angel Firpo to the soggy canvas.

While the referee was still counting the first paragraph of a story by Luis Angel Firpo was being sent over the wires. Before Firpo could be dragged to his corner that first paragraph was being set up in the composing room of a newspaper in New Orleans.

Robert H. Davis, the conscientious reporter, at the Battle of the Carson Valley squatted in the corner of Fitzsimmons all during the fight. Between the rounds he questioned him and before the historic fourteenth he had the declaration of Fitzsimmons that the knockout was coming.

It was a great combination, a sincere prize fighter and a sincere and thorough reporter. The prize ring in its entirety and journalism in part has changed considerably since that time and not for better.

Mr. Davis began the study of "Ruby Robert" unhampered by a technical knowledge of the manly art of modified murder. In this regard he was particularly fortunate. It is because prize fighting has been written by experts that its records are so befuddled. Here is a case in point. Four hundred experts and trained observers went to Reno, Nevada, to re-

port the Jeffries-Johnson fight. On the eve of this bout all but two of the four hundred reported that Jeffries was "fit as a fiddle and ready for the tap of the gong," or words to that effect.

The next evening the accounts all started after this fashion: "A mere hollow shell of his former self, James J. Jeffries went down to defeat before Jack Johnson." The words may have varied but not the theme. If Mr. Davis had been an expert we would know as little about the real "Ruby Robert" as we know about the other gladiators past and present.

I fear that Mr. Davis has since become an expert. Since the Battle of the Carson Valley he is continually at various ringsides and always close enough to be choked by the resin dust. He is perhaps not quite as rabid a prize-fight fan as was Nat Goodwin, who closed a show on the excuse that one of his wives was dangerously ill and then appeared at a current prize fight. Nevertheless he is a fan. It must be that he is obsessed with the notion that some time and somewhere he may see another fighter like the "Ruby Robert" of his story.

Reading through this story again, I am im-

pressed with how little is told about the real heavyweight champions. At Toledo that blazing Fourth of July on which William Harrison Dempsey battered down Jess Willard, something over a million words were sent out from the ringside. The gross was something like a thousand times as many words as were used in describing the battle of the Marne. I recall writing seven thousand words myself.

Since that time there have been more millions of words written about William Harrison Dempsey, including several alleged autobiographies. Yet those who have read all this mass of material will ask, "What is Dempsey really like?"

This story of "Ruby Robert" bares the soul of one gladiator, and I think epitomizes the spirit of the prize ring before it degenerated into the cauliflower industry. The sincerity of the quaintest gladiator of them all inspired sincerity in his biography; and in his story you have all the glamor, the pathos and the humor of the gladiatorial game from Rome to Boyle's Thirty Acres.

W. O. McGeehan.

The New York Herald-Tribune,
February 1, 1926.

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"RUBY ROBERT"
Alias BOB FITZSIMMONS

"RUBY ROBERT"

Part One

CAPTURE OF FITZSIMMONS AND THE FLIGHT TO CARSON

FEBRUARY 15, 1897, about eleven o'clock in the morning, Mr. C. M. Palmer, business manager of the New York *Journal* accosted me as I was stepping from the elevator on the second floor of the *Tribune* Building.

"Been looking for you."

"At your service."

"You are from Carson, Nevada?"

"Yes; I left there when I was eighteen. I went to Frisco to improve Pacific Coast journalism."

"Yes, I remember that, too," replied Palmer, who was also a San Franciscan; "but that is another story. Bob Fitzsimmons is on his way to Carson, Nevada, with his manager, Martin Julian, and trainers to open headquarters. This afternoon he will reach

Chicago and leave there some time to-morrow morning. He is traveling by easy stages. You can get a fast train out of New York between two and three and catch him at Denver.

"Mr. Hearst wants to tie him up for thirty days prior to the fight and twenty-four hours after. We will pay him ten thousand dollars if he will put himself exclusively in the hands of the Hearst newspapers; five thousand cash upon signing the agreement, and five thousand the day following the fight. You've got three and a half hours to pack your grip. I will have the contracts, transportation, and cash ready for you within an hour."

I hastened to my apartment, tossed some clothing into a suitcase, and took the necessary steps for a hasty departure from New York for the West. As I was leaving my abode I noticed an old blue sweater hanging on the hatrack. True to form and as a concession to my sporting blood, I jammed it into the grip. So much for atmosphere.

I returned to the office and received the five thousand in fifty crisp one-hundred-dollar greenbacks and a certificate of deposit

for five thousand on the Bullion and Exchange Bank of the City of Carson, Nevada. As I was leaving the office, Mr. Hearst himself strolled in and in his soft, deliberate voice added the final instructions:

"We are paying Fitzsimmons for his silence. He cannot speak to any one, write to any one, pose for photographs, or carry on any intercourse whatever except through you or in your presence. We want the total output from the Fitzsimmons camp, and if at any time this agreement is broken you are to withhold the five thousand that is otherwise due on the day after the fight.

"And another thing, if between here and Denver your pockets are picked of this five thousand dollars cash, that is your affair. File two stories a day, one for the morning and one for the afternoon paper. A staff of photographers from the San Francisco *Examiner* will meet you at Carson. Bill Naughton and Robert Edgren will cover Corbett from the West."

I caught the flyer for Chicago early in the afternoon on the trail of Ruby Robert. From every angle the whole transaction was some-

thing of an experiment. To begin with, I had never seen a prize fight, and with the exception of a glimpse or two of John L. Sullivan, who toured the country ten years before, I had never even seen a prize fighter. It occurred to me that the mere fact that I had been a boyhood resident of Carson, Nevada, was small justification for handing me a job, about which I knew nothing and of which I had had no previous experience.

In Chicago I bought a copy of the *Police Gazette Sporting Annual* containing statistics and best performances in pugilism, athletics, swimming, rowing, baseball, trotting, and racing. I became saturated with all the important dates in pugilistica and could babble more or less entertainingly and with accuracy on any sport that carried a diamond belt or cup for trophy. In the language of Chuck Connors I was "dere wit the inside dope."

On the afternoon of the 18th, a few hours on the heels of Fitzsimmons and his retinue, I rolled into Denver, hopped a hack, and followed the mob to the Brown Palace Hotel, where the antipodean was registered. The town was agog with excitement. The mayor,

the common council, the volunteer firemen, the Sons of Veterans, etc., were all battling with each other to give the visitor a proper Western reception. All attempts to catch up with this particular party resulted in delay.

I pursued Fitz through every barroom in Denver and finally confronted him on the steps of the Brown Palace Hotel. Hurriedly I explained my mission. Martin Julian was rather skeptical about any transaction that involved payment in two parts.

"When do we get the five thousand?" he asked.

"When you sign this agreement," which I read hastily, while the mob milled about us.

"Have you got the five with you?"

"In the mitt," I replied. "Fifty one hundred case notes."

"Maybe this boy's got something we need," opined Mr. Julian. "Come upstairs."

At that moment a gentleman named Shoemaker rushed madly down the hall and announced that the train left in ten minutes and that if we had any further business we had better transact it in the car. We made a wild

rush for the depot and grabbed the Leadville Cannonball.

"Now, Mr. Davis," continued Mr. Julian, after getting his breath, "let's see the color of that coin."

I exposed the roll with certain dramatic gestures, peeling off the sweet, new, hundred-dollar layers with a moist finger.

"Do I understand that I don't talk to anybody but you?" asked Fitz, with one eye on the coin and the other on the contract.

"That's the idea."

"And I can't see nobody but you?"

"Exactly."

" 'Ow about the other newspapers?"

"We'll take care of them. They'll get everything we get."

I did not explain to Fitz that they would have to pay for it. Why annoy him with details?

"Another thing," I added, counting the sheaf of bills casually, "thirty-one hundred, thirty-two hundred, thirty-three hundred — I will stand between you and the mob, be a sort of private secretary to you—thirty-five hundred, thirty-six hundred. No matter who calls to

chat, just refer them to me—thirty-seven hundred, eight, nine, four thousand. Really I could save you a lot of trouble, Fitz."

Mr. Julian, always a first-class business man, took matters into his hands at this juncture.

"Well, I guess there's something in that, and we may go through with it."

I resumed my counting.

"Forty-one hundred, forty-two hundred—"

"Give it to me," said Mr. Julian. "I'll count it myself."

He closed in on the wad with lightninglike rapidity and performed his mathematics.

"Five thousand flat."

I handed him a fountain pen. He signed the agreement for Bob Fitzsimmons as manager, and as a guarantee of good faith Bob o. k.'d the document in his own flowing hand.

While the train was toiling up that long and terrifying grade between Denver and Leadville I was presented to the noble retinue: Ernest Roeber, the wrestler, whose fortune it was to teach the wily Robert some of the fundamentals of wrestling and the tactics of roughhouse; Dan Hickey, who still survives

and is now managing "Bustum" Paul Berlenbach, boxing professor emeritus and a skillful tutor if ever there was one; Mr. Jack Stelzner, a sturdy youngster who could take a wallop on either jaw and not lose his high esteem for the donor, and who had the disposition of the end-man in a minstrel troupe—he laughed upon the slightest provocation and looked on a smash in the ribs or a poke on the chin as equal to any of Joe Miller's best output (he is now a police sergeant in San Francisco); and Mr. James Shoemaker, touring factotum, who was familiar with every known trick designed to defeat baggage busters, railroad men, conductors, and the vested interests met with in traveling.

I filed a long story at Leadville announcing that the New York *Journal* office cat had swallowed the Australian canary. From that moment I became Bob Fitzsimmons' private-secretary and relieved him of the necessity of further contact with the mob. To all intents and purposes he became deaf and dumb in the presence of all others save myself, and qualified in every way as the Disciple of the Sealed Lips.

The news of Fitzsimmons' capture was something of a shock to several hundred loathsome contemporaries. At Glenwood Springs next morning the telegraph wires began to burn with queries from all over the United States. These telegrams were turned over to me. I do not recall having ever seen a finer collection of suggested reprisal.

Mr. Julian, who was not without a certain esteem for free advertising, became inoculated with the virus of doubt as to the wisdom of our contract. Fitzsimmons was perfectly willing to stand pat, but his manager wanted to talk it over. The three of us withdrew to a star chamber and plunged into a trialogue. It was a long-winded and fierce argument, *sans* diplomacy. Julian stated his position in one speech:

"You people have paid five thousand dollars and tied Fitz up so no other newspaper men can speak to him. That don't make friends for us; nothing but enemies. And the other five thou' don't come through until after the fight. Suppose some smart Alec reporter comes in and pulls a fake interview. Where do we get off? I'll tell you: we get burned for

five thousand bucks and you guys cop a lot of exclusive news."

The fly in the ointment seemed to be the undelivered five. Obviously the situation called for something radical. I pointed out that we were three honorable gentlemen with unbounded confidence each in the others, and that not elsewhere in the sporting world could our peers be found.

"As regards the remaining five thousand, Mr. Julian, watch me."

I drew from my pocket the certificate of deposit which called for five thousand dollars on the Bullion and Exchange Bank and wrote with a bold hand, "*Pay to the order of Martin Julian for Robert Fitzsimmons,*" and added my name to perfect the indorsement. The smashing of my instructions was complete.

"That's good enough for me!" exclaimed Martin, folding the document up and placing it tenderly in a tight wallet. He cared nothing for the cost. It was the principle of the thing. We shook hands with unfeigned cordiality.

I take this occasion to say that that contract was never broken, in thought, word, or deed. Fitzsimmons and his entire training camp car-

ried out its provisions to the letter. Every conceivable pressure was brought to bear by other correspondents to get under the skin of Fitzsimmons and his trainers and behind the scenes in his quarters. Moreover, the newspaper men of the United States, with one exception, the details of which I shall record later, accepted the situation gracefully and got their news either from the *Journal* syndicate or through their own dexterity, plus imagination.

Late that afternoon Julian left for Carson to open Bob's training quarters at the Cook ranch, two miles east of the arena, which was then under construction. That night Bob and I shared the same room. It was there that I received my baptism of pugilistic fire.

The training gentry from adjoining apartments came in for a good-night conference. I was the only person in the room wearing a white shirt and a stiff collar. We had a light luncheon, swore the little company to secrecy and silence, and prepared to retire. I had unpacked my grip, disclosing the meager wardrobe, including the blue sweater, of a traveler in swift transit.

"Look 'ere, Dan!" piped Fitz, in that high contralto voice that gave his utterance individuality. "My secretary's got training duds. Let 'im wear 'em."

With that Ruby Robert shot his massive, freckled right hand at my Adam's apple, inserted two fingers in the collar band of my white shirt, and tore it out by the roots. Never was a completer disrobing scene framed in this country. The stickpin and collar buttons splashed all over the room. Had the necktie not been rent asunder it would have decapitated me. That was the only vandal act the great antipodean ever offered his private secretary.

Dan Hickey was sufficient of an aristocrat to realize that international complications were about to ensue.

"Pay no attention to him. He's only kidding you."

Ernest Roeber blushed clear to the armpits and Jack Stelzner left the room on the arm of Mr. Jim Shoemaker. For this I had paid ten thousand dollars in cash in the last twenty-four hours. Well, as somebody said in Latin, *"Let the buyer beware."* Part of my vest had come away with the shirt and one loop of my sus-

penders hung helplessly. It was a tense moment. Fitz picked up my cheap blue sweater and stood there smiling, as though he had accomplished a new dress reform. There wasn't anything in his eyes except good humor.

"Put it on," he said.

"When in Rome . . ." I extended my hand, concealing under a thin veneer of agreeability a burning desire to bust him with a chair.

"You said it," I replied; "but not that blue rag. Give me a sweater that belongs to the next champion of the world."

The tension was broken and with a deft gesture Bob peeled off the white sweater that adorned his own body and knighted me with its possession. From that day until he died there was between us an unbroken friendship that is indeed agreeable to look back upon.

In about three days we got out of the Rocky Mountains into Utah and thence to Reno, Nevada. The reception along the highway was a riot. Yokels not infrequently mistook me in my new white sweater for some athletic mastodon endowed with special qualities that would sooner or later be imparted to Fitzsimmons.

Hickey, Roeber, and Stelzner accepted me

as an equal and gave me their confidence, as is the custom when the truly great are touring the land in day coaches.

Fitzsimmons was beset constantly by a mob of admirers. Any question asked him produced the invariable reply: "Tike it up with my secretary."

In Winnemucca, Nevada, a cow puncher climbed aboard the train and announced that he would be at the ringside if he had to walk.

"Well, if you get there broke," said Fitzsimmons, "there will be a seat for you. Mr. Davis, take this note:

"DAN STEWART,
"Carson, Nevada,
"Ringside, March 17.

"DEAR DAN: If this gentleman is broke when he gets to Carson, please admit him and charge it up to me.

"ROBERT FITZSIMMONS."

"Who the hell is Stewart?" asked the cow puncher, accepting the pass and tucking it into the hatband of his Stetson. "Where can I find *him?*"

"You needn't worry about that, said Bob. "If you can't find him there ain't going to be no fight."

On the morning of February 20 we rolled into Carson on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad and received an ovation. Many and weird were the comments which were directed at Fitzsimmons and myself. The natives of the Nevada capital had not seen me for twelve years. My reappearance in the white sweater, leaning heavily on the arm of one of the world's greatest personalities, resulted in a variety of comments which, in the modern terminology, could be summed up in the single all-sweeping sentence:

"What do you know about that?"

My father, in the garb of a clergyman, greeted me affectionately. I presented Fitzsimmons.

"Parson, I'm glad to meet you. Are you coming to the fight? My secretary here will see that you get a good seat."

My father, who had been living under the impression that I was probably one of the greatest living journalists, paled at the word "secretary" and flung me an inquiring look. I

dropped one eyelid, depending on his sense of humor, which he did not lack, to clarify the atmosphere. He saw the light.

The group was broken up by a mob of milling correspondents who rushed in for copy. Fitzsimmons braced himself, scanned the mob, and exclaimed:

"I can't talk for publication."

"Can't you tell us how you feel?"

"Not a word."

A battery of cameras began to click.

"How much do you weigh?"

"I refer you to my secretary."

He was utterly indifferent to all inquiries. We finally made our way through the group, climbed into two buckboards, and drove to the Cook ranch, two miles east of the town, where Julian had equipped training quarters with every modern convenience.

Corbett was already established at Shaw's Hot Springs, a mile north of the city. Correspondents were arriving on every train. There were sixty-seven of the best equipped sporting writers in the United States parked in the city, the cream of the profession, not one of whom, with the exception of the Hearst group, was

able to extricate a line of first-hand information from the two principals.

Upon reaching the Cook ranch I drew up a bill of sale and bought the farm for one dollar in hand paid, put up "No Trespassing" signs all over the board fences, and assumed the functions of one of the landed gentry for a period of thirty days. This sealed the Fitzsimmons training quarters against all comers.

Every correspondent called as a matter of form, only to encounter a freckled Sphinx. No cameras were permitted in the limits of the estate. There was a widespread contempt for Mr. Fitzsimmons' secretary, to say nothing of comments, uncomplimentary and unprintable. It was the first time in the history of pugilism that a fighter was not accessible to all the press.

In one stage of the proceedings an indignation meeting was held at the Arlington Hotel, and the late Langdon Smith, at that time writing for the New York *Herald,* was appointed chairman of a Committee of Three to come to the Fitzsimmons headquarters and issue a fiat. There was no man in the profession for whom I had higher esteem, and the conference was not an agreeable one for me. The

committee was in no amiable mood. Smith had a cold look in his eye as he set forth the broad doctrine, "No interview for us, no space for Fitzsimmons."

"I'm sorry, gentlemen, you cannot see Mr. Fitzsimmons."

"Why?"

"He is busy typewriting his day's story."

"With his feet?" inquired a delegate from Kansas City.

"Oh, hell!" Langdon Smith exploded, and the committee drove back to Carson like the three tailors of Tooley Street to try out some other kind of petition.

The whole matter finally adjusted itself when the newspapers of the United States accepted the situation and took the Hearst service in full.

Part Two

FITZSIMMONS REVEALS THE GENESIS OF HIS ART

THE training at our camp went on without interruption. Sporting men from every quarter visited the camp and paid their respects, but the deadlock on news was complete. The only interview Fitzsimmons gave to an outsider during the entire period of his training fell on the ears of my own father, who had come down to the camp to visit the great Fitzsimmon's private secretary.

Davis *pere* had spent most of his life in the West and took men as he found them. On the occasion of the interview our whole staff was seated at the dinner table, with my eminently respected sire as the guest of honor. Fitzsimmons was in a highly conversational mood and delighted at this opportunity to express himself. The incongruity of the clerical collar in a group of heavily sweatered roughnecks was impressive, but the freemasonry of the hour leavened the affair.

My father, being an inquisitive man, asked a direct question:

"Why did you take up pugilism as a profession?"

Fitzsimmons cleared a place for his elbows among the empty plates and told this story:

"I was born in Cornwall, but when a bit of a kid my folks moved to Timaru, New Zealand, where my father ran a blacksmith shop. My mother believed heverything in the Bible, and the old man was worse than mother was about religion. Well, that meant that I 'ad to go to Sunday School. Once a week I 'ad to learn one of these 'ere now collects. You know what I mean, Parson. Every Sunday morning my mother would say:

"'''Ave you got your lesson, Robert?'

"Well, it was pie for me to learn one of them things in ten minutes. Then she would mike me recite it. After a while I knew more collects than any boy in the Sunday School, and the rest of the service, too. Hymns, psalms; and, if I do say it myself, I was pretty good; but a blacksmith gets tired of making horseshoes hall week and then going to church twice hevery Sunday.

"Well, one day the preacher—I think 'is name was Pritchard—put a notice up in the Sunday School sayin' that the boy who could recite the most collects would get a prayer book with gold clasps onto it. Well, that sounded something like it to me, and then we 'ad the contest. It was between the preacher's son and me. He knew I 'ad 'im groggy, because my memory was the best. Parson, you never saw anybody who could learn a collect as quick as I could.

"Well, as I was saying, we 'ave the showdown. Just like a spelling bee. 'E shot one and I shot one. Listen, you never saw a guy stub 'is toe like that kid. 'Is father seen 'e was up against it and the contest was stopped.

"Wot do you suppose 'appened? The preacher gives the prize to 'is own boy; and wot do you suppose I done: 'ides behind a lilac bush, and when 'e came out with the gold prayer book in 'is 'and I bashed 'im in the mush. 'E weighed ten stone if 'e weighed a pound, and I was about nine stone, but wot I done to 'im was plenty.

"First, I pokes 'im with my left in the belly, and as 'e leans forward I crossed 'im on the

chin with a short right. 'E lets a squawk out and starts to run. Well, I 'appened to be a good runner, too, and chased this big stiff into the vestry, where I socks 'im again. 'E drops the prayer book and sets 'imself like 'e 'ad something on 'is mind.

"Now, you can believe it or not, Parson, but I tikes 'is measure, swings an uppercut, and belts 'im on the chin for the count. 'E went cockeyed, lets a kind of a moan out, and 'its the floor. I can see 'im lying there yet, but he couldn't see me, because I picked up the prayer book and ran 'ome 'ellbent with the trophy. It was right there that I discovered what a sock I 'ad, and that, Parson, is 'ow I became a prizefighter."

The Reverend George R. Davis, who was toying with some breadcrumbs, looked at the Private Secretary askance, took out his watch, commented on the approach of evening, and decided that perhaps he had better be getting back to the city. Fitzsimmons followed him to the door with his arm around his shoulder, advising the Episcopalian divine that it was just as bad to "gyp" a Sunday School boy out of a prayer book as it was to rob a bank."

Part Three

CAMP LIFE—THE MEETING WITH CORBETT ON THE ROAD

IN preparing Fitzsimmons for his fight with Corbett, Dan Hickey, Ernest Roeber, and Jack Stelzner had laid out a careful course of boxing and wrestling with plenty of road running and lots of sleep. Our cuisine was in the hands of a Chinaman, whose idea of high-class cooking was a platter of pork chops with every meal.

About the first of March Bob's wife, with her two sons, Robert and Martin, accompanied by a maid, came to the camp and took entire charge of his diet, much of which she prepared with her own hands. He had an obsession for calf's-foot jelly, which he consumed by the pound. Half a chicken, two vegetables, and a rice or custard pudding was an average meal for him. For breakfast he ran to eggs, toast and coffee, ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, and lamb chops. I was a close second at the table.

He was always overweighted with clothing,

believing that a continuous mild warmth was preferable to one single chill. He slept under thin blankets and never moved until he rolled out in the morning.

His road work was the most systematic part of his program. Ten, twelve, or fifteen miles a day were nothing for him. Roeber, who weighed close to two hundred pounds, did not care much about those jogging exercises, but Hickey and Stelzner followed him valiantly. His secretary made three attempts to see the country at a dog trot and finally retired to private life in Mr. Cook's parlor. The third run about finished me. After nearly four miles I sat down by the roadside and said in a loud voice:

"I'm not going any farther."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm sick."

"How sick are you?"

"I've lost my appetite."

"Well, hall I can say is, it will break the man who finds it."

Ruby Robert therefore jogged onward, leaving me seated in the shade of a sheltering sagebrush.

The most interesting episode that occurred on the highway was when Corbett and his retinue came over into the bailiwick of Fitzsimmons. The two men met about a mile from the Fitzsimmons camp.

Fitz sighted the Corbett party coming down the penitentiary road, which leads to the State's prison and also to the Cook ranch. Billy Delaney, Charley White, Jim Jeffries, and a boxer named McCarthy were with Corbett. The late Bill Naughton, sporting editor of the San Francisco *Examiner,* ambled along in the rear in a two-wheeled cart, waiting to see what he could see. I always thought that Bill negotiated that little meeting by inducing Corbett to go out of his own jurisdiction into the enemy's country.

Fitzsimmons was accompanied by Dan Hickey and the Great Dane, Yarum. When the two groups drew together Bob and Hickey walked up and shook hands with Delaney, Charley White, Jeffries, and McCarthy. The next man in the procession was Corbett. Fitz strode forward and offered his palm. Corbett made a gesture as though to accept and then suddenly changed his mind.

"I'll shake hands with you over there," he said, waving his arm in the direction of the nearly completed arena visible across the fields.

Fitz seemed quite embarrassed and flushed.

"I'll shake after I've licked you," continued Corbett, as though to add a period to his statement.

"Then we'll never shake!" replied Fitz.

"You don't think you can lick me?" asked Corbett.

Fitz released a guttural laugh.

"What am I up 'ere training for?"

"I'll see you next Wednesday over there, and you had better bring your dog," retorted Corbett.

"I don't need the dog. You needn't wait until Wednesday," bristled the Australian, preparing to shed a light coat he was wearing. "I can lick you right 'ere and now!"

Billy Delaney took immediate charge of the situation, mumbling something about the absurdity of two gentlemen acting up on the public highway, thus averting what might have been an utterly profitless affair without motion pictures or gate receipts.

I knew nothing about this meeting until Hickey came running into my quarters, breathless and full of glee.

"Fitz just licked Corbett!"

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say! They met on the road above the prison and had some words."

He then described the meeting in full.

"Thought you said he licked him?"

Dan Hickey is a first-class Irish gentleman and believes in banshees, leprechauns, and fairies.

"That's the idea," he said, hurriedly. "The minute Bob started to take off his coat Corbett knew that Bob wasn't afraid of him. From that moment defeat set on Corbett's shoulders. He will go into the ring a whipped man. He hasn't got a chance! Delaney, Jeffries, and Charley White know he is licked, and, so far as I'm concerned, the fight's won."

The fire and conviction with which Dan Hickey emitted this observation quite convinced me that there was nothing left except the referee counting "Ten!" over the prostrate Californian. It had quite the opposite effect

on Fitz. For several days he brooded over the fact that Corbett had refused what Bob intended to be a cordial salutation. By nature Fitzsimmons was a more or less sentimental, even-tempered man, slow to anger and swift to forgiveness. Rancor, hatred, and enmity had no part in his composition. I have heard him repeatedly say that he never fought a fight in his life, but that he always felt sorry when he saw his adversary fall.

In the meeting with the original Jack Dempsey at New Orleans, when the Nonpareil was staggering around that dirt arena helpless and facing defeat, Fitzsimmons begged him to quit.

"The champion never quits," retorted Dempsey, puffing a crimson spray from his bloody lips. "You've got to knock me out."

Fitzsimmons considered it an act of mercy to drop this incomparable man and terminate his agony. Dempsey fell face forward with his shattered mouth in the mud.

"To my dying day," said Fitzsimmons, describing this fight, "I will see Dempsey lying there with the little red bubbles busting as 'e breathed heavily into the red earth. I picked

'im up and helped carry 'im to his corner. I never lifted a braver man to 'is feet."

Two days before the fight, about six in the morning, the Chinese cook came into the room in which Fitz and I were sleeping and woke us up.

"Jesse now I see one man he like take phlotoglaph."

"Wot's on your mind, Chink?" asked Bob.

"He out in sageblush. He gottem clamala leady. You come look see."

We repaired to the kitchen and through the window discerned, just tipping the sagebrush, a large eleven by fourteen camera turned on the doorway of Fitzsimmons' dressing room, which faced southeast; an ideal spot to take a photograph when the daylight arrived. Here was a trespasser, the first that had crept into our dominion.

We instructed the Chinaman to go right on with his preparation for breakfast and to leave the rest to us. As the light increased we could detect a thin rubber tube running away from the camera to a point in the sagebrush about twenty feet from the instrument itself.

Behind the kitchen door of the Cook home-

stead reposed a ten-gauge duck gun and an assortment of loaded shells. Fitzsimmons had a great plan:

After breakfast, just as the sun was coming up, he was to leave the farmhouse in his bathrobe and go to his dressing shack, which was built about four feet above the ground and was approached by a short stairway. Hickey, Stelzner, and Roeber were to group themselves around the entrance in graceful poses while Bob, at the head of the staircase in the open door, was to shed his bathgown and stand revealed in all his splendid physical majesty, wearing only a pair of trunks. No finer picture could have been had under any circumstances.

"Now you, Mr. Secretary, get the shotgun, open the window just a little bit, and when that cove gets his picture I don't care wot you do."

All set. 'A few moments after sun-up the quartet of intrepid jokesmiths strolled out to the dressing room and pulled the tableau, Fitz looked more like a gladiator at that moment than at any time in his life. He was as pink as a baby. His round, barrel-like chest was

inflated with deep breathing. His massive arms, in spite of their heroic proportions, hung lightly from his gorgeous shoulders. He faced the sunlight and came to rest.

"Click."

A perfect exposure.

"Bang!"

A perfect surprise. The camera hopped into space like a gigantic cockroach.

"Bang!"

The second barrel carried the death stroke. Glass plates seemed to be bursting for an indefinite period. The whole tripod rose from the earth like a skyrocket, crossed its triplicate legs, hovered for a moment and crashed to terra firma. The entrails of a six-hundred-dollar instrument disintegrated in all directions and rained its worthless fragments over an acre or more.

The fat gentleman, who we afterward learned was a photographic zealot from Chicago, rose from the sagebrush and ran practically out of the State in a cloud of dust.

That was the only filibuster who had the courage to make a raid. I would give a good deal to possess that photographic plate to-day. It must have been a beauty.

Part Four

AT THE RINGSIDE—FITZSIMMONS DECLINES THE HAND OF CORBETT

MARCH 17, 1897. One of those perfect mountain mornings, the atmosphere like crystal, not a cloud in the deep blue sky. Mrs. Fitzsimmons cooked Bob's breakfast: Half a chicken, two slices of toast, one cup of coffee, and a compote of stewed fruit. Bob did a little shadow boxing in the gymnasium and was subjected by Hickey to a thorough rubdown, after which he was wrapped in blankets and remained quiet until eleven o'clock, when we left for the arena in which had gathered about seven thousand customers.

Just before departing we weighed Bob, stripped, on a steelyard, than which there is no more accurate weighing device in the world. He tipped the scale at exactly one hundred and fifty-six and a half pounds.

"I'm still a middleweight. Now let's see wot 'appens," was his only observation.

The dressing room had been built in under

the reserved seats and was extremely cold. Fitzsimmons disrobed and was reblanketed so completely that nothing was visible except a lock of his light hair, his eyes, and his nostrils. He remained perfectly quiet and said very little.

Dan Stewart, the promoter of the fight, came in and asked one question:

"Are you all right?"

"Never better," replied Fitz.

Mrs. Fitzsimmons was standing at the head of the rude couch upon which Ruby Robert was stretched, smoothing his forehead. Stewart, with an almost imperceptible lift of his eyebrows, conveyed to me the suggestion that she should be escorted to her seat. I played the cavalier and started for the ringside with Mrs. Fitzsimmons on my arm. Suddenly she stopped.

"I must see Bob again. I've got to see him."

With that she ran back to Bob, who was sitting up, his shoulders and torso bare. Hickey was preparing to give him another rubdown. Rose, repulsing Messrs. Hickey and Roeber, gathered Bob into her arms as a mother embraces a child.

Bob cast aside the remaining blanket, stood

up, pressed Rose to his heart, and declaimed in his high voice:

"Rose, go back to your seat. When this fight is hover you will be the wife of the champion of hall the champions of hall the world."

I hurried the good woman to the seat beside the late Senator John J. Ingalls, who had been engaged by the *Journal* to describe the fight from its senatorial aspects. The lawmaker was the soul of courtesy and did his best to entertain the lady. I returned to the dressing room to arrange with Fitzsimmons a plan by which I could converse with him between rounds, to ask him certain questions involving his condition, etc., to which he could reply by nodding or shaking his head, thus avoiding on his part unnecessary conversation.

I found him asleep. Hickey and I talked in the corridor while the serene Fitzsimmons steeped himself in composure. After fifteen minutes he awaked and called us in and the scheme for communications between rounds was formulated. Shortly after that the summons came to enter the ring. Corbett followed in five minutes. My seat was immediately be-

hind Fitzsimmons, as close to the post as I could get. On my right sat Mrs. Fitzsimmons and on her right Senator Ingalls. On my left were Hickey, Stelzner, Roeber, and Martin Julian.

George Siler, the referee, called the principals to the center of the ring and delivered the customary preliminary instructions, after which both men returned to their corners.

The gong sounded. Corbett stepped out of his corner and walked toward Fitzsimmons with his hand extended. Fitz, still smarting under the indignity that had occurred on the highway, declined the hand of his foe. No one at that ringside, not even his wife, had an inkling of Bob's intention. Corbett flushed as Fitzsimmons had flushed a few days before on the open road; but there is a vast difference between embarrassment in the presence of a baker's dozen and before ten thousand fight fans.

For an instant a profound stillness settled over the arena. Both men, in the pink of condition, stood like a pair of stone images, Corbett with his high guard, buoyant in posture, apparently poised on the balls of his feet; Fitz-

simmons with his left foot far in advance of his right, apparently standing flat, his massive battering rams swinging from his shoulders.

Action! Lead! Block! Counter! Cross in and out! Blow for blow! Caution! Craft! Each coaxed the other to lead, to come forward, to start a right or a left.

The lithe Californian moved like a shadow. At times the Australian appeared to be like the bronze blacksmith who used to strike the chimes on the New York *Herald* clock, moving only at the hips, waiting to release a sledge-hammer at his adversary. A cautious pair.

The gong sounded at the end of the first round. I climbed up behind Fitz and showered him with queries, which he answered by nodding or shaking his head.

Second round. Third round. Fourth round. All pretty much alike. Numerous blows were struck, none of particular consequence. It was plain that Corbett was the better boxer. At the end of the fourth round, as Fitzsimmons took his seat, he blurted into my right ear:

"Ask any questions you want. I'll talk to you. I'm not winded. 'E can't knock me out.

I haven't felt a single punch. If 'e will only lead."

Well, from that moment until the end of the fight Fitz and I carried on a running conversation after each round, discussing his condition, his hopes, and his irritation at delay. He chafed at Corbett's activity. He seemed to have one idea, one desire: To get close enough to plant that invincible left.

The morning of the fight S. S. Chamberlain, managing editor of the New York *Journal,* sent me this telegram:

> Please wire your guess as to result.
> S. S. CHAMBERLAIN.

Having had no experience with the prize ring, I handed the telegram to Fitz. After a moment of reflection he said:

"Tell him I'll win in seven rounds."

"Which hand?"

"Left hand."

"Chin or body?"

"I'll 'it 'im somewhere in the body. It ain't so easy to 'it 'is chin."

I went to my typewriter, thought the matter over for a while, and decided that the seven rounds idea was a bad lay. Being mildly superstitious and believing in the number seven, I decided finally to double Fitzsimmons' guess; to take seven for each of us and let him have his own way with the left hand. I wired:

> My guess is fourteen rounds. Left-hand body blow. Fitzsimmons wins.
>
> R. H. Davis.

The whole transaction was the wild guess of an untutored individual posing as an expert. It was passed around the office and met with wild guffaws. Furthermore, it was chalked on the bulletin board in front of the *Journal* office, where it remained for about half an hour, and was finally erased.

Due to the high, dry atmosphere of the mountains, four thousand feet above sea level, a crack had developed in Fitzsimmons' thick lower lip and widened by Hickey in training bouts. It would not heal. During the fourth and fifth rounds Corbett reached this tender spot with repeated left jabs. At the beginning

of the sixth round it began to bleed. A thin stream of blood ran down to Bob's chin, where it began to smear.

Corbett mistook this red badge for something important and stepped in with considerable vigor. He planted a left on Bob's cheekbone. Bob slipped it off with a slight turn to the right. Both men then mixed it and as Bob came out of the clinch he slipped. Corbett was setting himself for a right wallop, but Fitzsimmons, slightly off his balance, seized Corbett around the legs and slid down his body to the floor.

Not a blow was struck during that entire performance. It was merely a question of one man off his balance reaching the floor through a little play of tactical dexterity. The moment his right knee touched he let go of Corbett and Siler began to count. Corbett stepped back with an air of confidence. At the count of nine Fitzsimmons, whose mouth and chin were pretty well covered with blood, got up, backed away, and set himself. Corbett showed no inclination to mix it the rest of that round. He must have known that it was no blow of his that floored his opponent.

There was so little concern in the Fitzsim-

mons corner between the sixth and seventh rounds that we joked about the prophecy.

"Here comes the seventh, Bob," I said. "What are you going to do?"

"I can't get at 'im. 'E's fast. Wait."

One swipe of a sponge cleared the blood from the lip and chin, upon which there was not the slightest abrasion.

It is a curious commentary upon reportorial accuracy that the eighth, ninth, and tenth rounds as described in the American newspapers prove that the human equation plays an important rôle when even the manly art is under discussion. A review of the files of twenty metropolitan journals will convince the reader that after all the hand is quicker than the eye. There were blows described, shifts analyzed, blocks, feints, etc., carefully pointed out, but somehow or other they seemed to have escaped the cinematograph.

Part Five

THE "SOLAR PLEXUS" BLOW IS BORN—FITZSIMMONS WINS

BOTH men were singularly cautious from the very beginning, and to my unpracticed eye it seemed either man's fight up to the beginning of the thirteenth round, during the latter half of which Fitzsimmons began to land his blows on Corbett's face. During the mix-up Fitzsimmons shot a short right across his own left guard. One of Corbett's gold teeth fell out, smote the canvas and ricocheted among the boxholders.

In this round Bob circled Jim four or five times, seeking a chance to plant his left. On one occasion, when Fitzsimmons stopped with his back to the north, he made a gesture as though to shade his eyes from the blazing sun that was riding a blue sky in the southern quarter.

"Keep out of the sun, Bob," shouted Mrs. Fitzsimmons, waving her hand at her husband. That was the only audible remark uttered by

Mrs. Fitzsimmons during the entire fight. She spoke casually to Senator John Ingalls and myself four or five times, generally in monosyllables and always with commendable reserve.

Just before the close of the thirteenth round Fitzsimmons worked close to Corbett and began to plant body blows. The San Franciscan for the first time seemed to be in actual distress, whereas Fitzsimmons was gaining confidence and moving with panther-like alacrity. When the round ended both men were in the middle of the ring. Fitz took his corner with one bound. Before I had an opportunity to ask him a question, he placed his left glove against his right cheek, leaned down close to the post where I was standing and said deliberately:

"'Ave you got any money on you?"

"Eighty dollars in gold."

"Bet it all on the next round. I am going to knock 'im out."

I jumped down, turned to Fred Bushnell, official photographer for both camps, handed him my own eighty dollars and imparted the thrilling information with instructions to put it all up as fast as he could and in as many

directions. There was so much interest centering on the ring at that moment that the little transaction between Bushnell and myself attracted no attention. It was easy for him to place it at odds of two, three, and five to one.

The gong! Fourteenth round. Corbett led and was blocked. He followed with a left at Fitzsimmons' head. Fitzsimmons swung on Corbett's neck and Jim gave ground. Bob stabbed him with a left and a right. Corbett became wild and missed with both hands.

The most accurate description of this fourteenth round came from the lips of Fitzsimmons in the form of dictation. I quote it herewith as follows:

> When the opportunity came in the beginning of the fourteenth round Corbett was fighting a little wild, and made a swing which I sidestepped. In a flash I saw a clean opening on his stomach and came in with the left-hand shift on his wind, and then, without changing position of my feet, shot the same hand against his jaw, thus giving him the identical finish which I

administered to Sharkey in San Francisco. I was sure I had done the trick, and although he made a hard struggle to get back on his feet, he was counted out by the referee and lost the championship.

Mr. James W. Coffroth, at that time a young man and a very efficient typist and stenographer, now a boxing and racing promoter of international fame, volunteered to take my dictation after the fight. When I reached the fourteenth round Fitzsimmons insisted upon describing it in his own words, as above.

Threescore and ten correspondents of the ringside have packed that round with the description of the one great punch: *the left shift to the pit of the stomach.* Corbett appeared to be standing still, but such was the speed and violence of the blow that Fitzsimmons' left arm seemed to disappear into Corbett's midst almost to the elbow.

A groan came from Jim's open mouth. He strained as though stricken with lockjaw, the whole upper body retching in apparent effort to reassemble the bodily functions and start to live again.

The late Dr. John W. Girdner, upon reading the dispatches describing the blow, announced that Corbett had been struck in the "solar plexus." This was the birthday of a new blow felt 'round the world.

As soon as Siler counted Corbett out and tapped Fitzsimmons as victor, pandemonium broke loose at the ringside. Instantly the squared circle was filled with seconds, backers, trainers, advisors, officers of the law, and souvenir-seekers. Fitzsimmons stepped back to his corner, leaned down over the ropes and kissed his wife thrice full upon the mouth, leaving a little group of red stains upon her trembling lips.

Senator John Ingalls of Kansas, stunned to silence, rose from his seat, inserted his right hand between the folds of his frock coat and surveyed the battle ground in the manner of Daniel Webster confronting the Senate just before his reply to Hayne. Above the mêlée rose the voice of William A. Brady inveighing against something the nature of which nobody could quite understand. Corbett was assisted to his feet, dazed and helpless. All powers of resistance had left him. Presently, however,

he recovered with great effort and demanded the privilege of confronting his conqueror.

The confusion was so great that in order to prevent myself from being separated from Fitzsimmons I grabbed a towel hanging on the ropes and tied my right arm to Bob's left, requesting Jack Stelzner to make a double knot as a guarantee of permanency. He made a good job of it and almost stopped the circulation of my blood.

This Siamese twin of press and pugilism was surrounded by twenty people, most of whom had no right in the ring. Suddenly the group separated and Corbett appeared on Fitzsimmons' right.

"You've got to fight me again!" he shouted. "I'm entitled to another chance!"

Fitzsimmons then offered his hand, which Corbett accepted without for one second stemming his clamor for a return match.

"I am through with the ring," said Fitz.

"If you don't fight me," said Jim, "I'll lick you every time I meet you on the street!"

Fitzsimmons replied very earnestly, "If you ever lay a hand on me outside the prize ring, I'll kill you."

From the Albert Davis Collection

Fitzsimmons as the hero in "The Fight For Love," which marked the pinnacle of his theatrical career. He deserted the stage to take on Rulin, Dunkhorst and lesser lights' about the forty-fifth year of his life. His speaking voice was high and penetrating, and he never forgot his lines.

From the Albert Davis Collection

"Ruby Robert" in the seer and yellow of his life, with his knuckles broken and his hands useless for the fray still maintained the debonair qualities that gave him distinction. He loved sartorial display and enjoyed the occupation of the saunterer among those who dreamed of the immutable past.

Corbett set himself for a sock with his right hand. Fitz, forgetting that he was leashed to literature, pivoted his whole body and started a wallop at Corbett with his left. Any schoolboy, knowing the theory of the fulcrum, must understand that it is a difficult matter to swing a two-hundred-pound man very far under those conditions. Even so, my feet were lifted off the flooring.

Both men were immediately separated and escorted to their respective dressing rooms. Mrs. Fitzsimmons followed, and a truly sentimental scene was enacted. Rose wept a little, which started a flood of tears from the eyes of the champion, whereupon the wife and mother reprimanded Robert for his display and commanded him to cease weeping immediately.

William Muldoon, now chairman of the New York Boxing Commission, came to Bob's dressing room and went with us to the Nevada State Penitentiary, which was on the way to the training quarters. Here Bob stripped and took a bath in the hot mineral springs. Muldoon made a careful examination of the new champion's body. Aside from the split lip, which antedated the fight by two weeks, and a red

spot over his left kidney, where he had taken a few punches, there was no evidence that he had been in a prize ring.

Muldoon was amazed at Bob's physical condition. That afternoon about two hours after the fight, on the prison scales, Bob weighed one hundred and fifty-seven pounds, plus. I remarked at the time:

"I outclass you fifty pounds," my weight then being two hundred and seven.

"And I am *still* a middleweight," said he.

About three-thirty we assembled at the Cook farm and received the public. Dr. S. L. Lee, who is still living in Carson, Nevada, came down to the camp and took two stitches in Bob's lower lip.

The Chinese cook spread himself for dinner, which concluded with a large platter of pork chops for dessert. At that banquet all restraint was cast to the winds and diet thrown into the discard. Hickey, Roeber, and Stelzner, still under the influence of a semi-diet, broke the bonds of reserve. When the repast was over every man present, including the new champion, was in the heavyweight class.

So much for Nevada and the seventeenth of

March, 1897. The next day, as we drove down the main street on the way to the depot, Fitzsimmons told me that his net profit out of the entire affair was fifteen thousand eight hundred dollars. Page Mr. Dempsey, Mr. Firpo, Mr. Gibbons, Mr. Leonard, and others whose "bit" from a single fight twenty-five years afterward ranged from one hundred thousand to half a million.

Part Six

DEFEAT—THE EX-CHAMPION COMES HOME IN THE DARK

ON March 18, 1897, at 7:35 p. m., the day after Fitzsimmons knocked out Corbett, we entrained out of the Carson depot with the new champion on board. At Reno the cowboy whom we had met at Winnemucca, and to whom Bob had given an order on Dan Stewart, came into the car to offer his felicitations. He had succeeded in getting a one-hundred-dollar bet down at three to one and was making quite a commotion.

"For the balance of your life, Fitz, every time you step into the ring, I'm going to bet on you and run this shoestring up to a fortune. And when you lose a fight I'm going to quit."

That cow puncher did not gather much money on the future. In July, 1899, Jim Jeffries knocked Fitz out at Coney Island.

Corbett had gone down to 'Frisco the night before on a special train, leaping the Sierra

Nevadas under cover of darkness, with no fanfare at the depots. The shock of the falling crown rocked California to its foundations, and a large delegation of busted sports consumed from one week to thirty days getting back to their various occupations and habitats. Nevertheless, when Bob turned up in San Francisco on the nineteenth of March his reception was genuinely cordial.

Shortly thereafter the transcontinental triumphal tour began. Bob insisted upon delivering a rear-platform speech in every town of a population of over five thousand. He wanted a new speech every time—one fitted to the locality. I wrote no less than twenty ballyhoos of from three to five hundred words in length. Bob had lost none of the mental nimbleness that enabled him to memorize a couple of dozen collects to win a prayer book in Timaru, New Zealand. He could memorize one of those short speeches in ten minutes.

By the time we reached New York he had some of the forensic charm of William Jennings Bryan, ready and willing at all hours to address the masses. The New York sports gave him a tremendous reception and a dinner

at the Bartholdi Hotel, the shell of which still stands on the corner of Twenty-third Street and Broadway.

I had written for him a speech which contained the phrase, *"The distant, snow-capped Sierras."* The last word was too much for Bob. He kept pronouncing it "Se-rary." No combination of elocutionary tutoring could mold the word to his lips; yet he liked the idea. In order to make it clearer, I spelled the word "See-era." In a few moments he had mastered it.

At the beginning of the banquet I wrote on a place card in capital letters the magic word "SEE-ERA" and set it before him. Milton Roblee introduced the new champion. Bob launched into a panegyric and was getting along famously. I felt quite confident that he would acquit himself handsomely.

Martin Julian was seated on Bob's left. For some impish reason that will never be explained, Martin picked up the place card, touched it to a candle flame, and with this improvised torch lit his cigar. He cast the charred remains into a glass of flat champagne.

Fitzsimmons, with his right hand aloft, was launching his thunderbolts:

"And when I look back to the seventeenth of March, in the beautiful Carson Valley, I still see those countless lovers of the manly art, who had come from all quarters of the Union to witness the battle of the century. I still can 'ear George Siler counting the ten fatal seconds over my fallen foe. In less time than it takes to utter the words I 'ad become the champion of the world, and forty operators were telegraphing the news across the distant, snow-capped—"

Bob glanced down where the card should have been. He swept the entire table in search of that hyphenated word. He shifted the tableware with lightning rapidity. A paralysis had fallen upon his lips. Panic-stricken, he turned to me for help. I slipped it to him three times, but he was deaf to all prompting. The pause became interminable. Martin Julian puffed on his freshly lighted cigar madly. The gentlemen of the press sensed a climax.

With one last terrified, searching look, Bob surrendered.

"Gentlemen"—(he swallowed)—"friends"—(he choked)—"I am sorry to say that some sucker 'as swiped my notes!" (Loud applause.)

Bob presently recovered himself, launched into the fragments of another speech intended for Kansas City, and sat down amid much tumult.

As far back as 1897 deliberation among champions was regarded as a manifestation of superiority. Fitz was in his thirty-sixth year and, by all rights, should have announced his retirement, but he was lured by large offers, and in 1899 went to his Waterloo at Coney Island under the terrible punches of the mastodon, Jeffries.

About the middle of the eleventh round, old man Fitz, in his thirty-eighth year, waving like a reed in the wind before the youth of twenty-four, dropped both hands to his sides in utter helplessness. Jeffries stepped back, measured the distance, set himself, and let fly a right-hand wallop that landed full on the point of Bob's jaw. Fitz fell like a poled ox, face forward, as the original Jack Dempsey must have fallen in the turf at New Orleans in the thirteenth round in 1891.

I bore the bad tidings to Bob's wife, who

was waiting that night in the Bath Beach home for news from the ringside. I found her seated on the veranda with Bobby, the eldest son, and Martin, the second boy, on either side of her. Rosie, the daughter, was asleep. Mrs. Fitzsimmons must have known from my demeanor that an ill wind was blowing. Both boys were sent into the house and to bed.

She beckoned me to a chair, which I accepted, and for want of something better to do began fanning myself. It was a frightfully hot night.

"How long did it last?"

"Eleven rounds."

"Was Bob marked any?"

"Not the slightest."

An expression of pain swept across her otherwise calm countenance. In spite of the fact that she had put on at least fifty pounds since her marriage, Rose Fitzsimmons, who had toured the United States as one of the Julian Trio, a family of acrobats, was still a beautiful woman. Her eyes were large and brown and quiet. She bore herself with dignity. A tear fell from her soft cheek, but immediately she recovered her composure.

"I warned Bob that he was too old to remain in the ring. Perhaps it is best after all. He'll stop now."

She made no further inquiry concerning that particular battle. Together we sat there awaiting the return of the fallen. The arena was only six miles from Bob's home. Half an hour after I reached the cottage, a little before midnight, I heard the unmistakable footfalls of my old friend coming along in the darkness. He was absolutely alone, paddling at a sort of dog trot.

As a guarantee that he was still nimble and fresh, he placed his hands on the gate post and vaulted into the yard. He stood there like a schoolboy.

"Rose," he exclaimed, "I was doped!"

"Don't say that," said his wife, rising and coming down the steps. "Nobody will believe you. You can't go on fighting forever."

He embraced her tenderly, pouring out a flood of explanations which she halted with her hand upon his mouth. He then asked to see the children. Rose left the veranda. Bob turned to me in the most casual way and said:

" 'Ow about something to eat?"

I sat at a midnight luncheon with Rose, the boys, and Robert. We rehearsed the days at Carson, and Bob, regardless of his wife's opposition, made plans for the future which he announced would include four fights a year with anybody, any weight, any color.

Part Seven

REMARKABLE PERFORMANCES AT THE CLOSE OF HIS CAREER

IN 1900 he went back into the ring and defeated Jim Daly, Ed Dunkhorst, Gus Ruhlin, and Tom Sharkey. In 1902 Jeffries whipped him again in San Francisco. From 1903 to 1914 he fought eight more fights, of which he won two, lost four, and two were "no decision." The last battle, at Williamsport, Pennsylvania, on January 29, 1914, with Dan Sweeney, found him in his fifty-second year. There is no such record in the prize ring of any country in all pugilistic history. He occupies an unique position among great pugilists.

There has always been some dispute as to whether he was a great boxer. Some authorities declared that he lacked science and grace. There have been many boxers who possessed finer technique, but not in all time has the ring produced a fighting machine so admirably equipped to mix it, take, and give it.

Owing to the magnificent proportions of his

chest and shoulders and the heroic dimensions of his arms, the narrowness of his hips and legs was by comparison accentuated. He moved with a shuffling, gangling gait, flat-footed. In repose he was slightly knock-kneed.

In the ring he had a habit of waving from the hips with his left foot far forward. When Fitzsimmons struck, it was with deadly accuracy. He may have been defective as a boxer and graceless on his feet, but, nine times out of ten, when he started a right or left for the point of the jaw, that's where it landed, and the rest was silence.

He was a perfect judge of distance and a master of timing. Any fighter who would mix it with Fitz did so at his own peril. The closer one got to Fitz, the harder he was hit. He won at least twenty fights at such close range that the impact of the wallop was heard before the spectator saw the blow start.

When Bob was in jeopardy he covered up instinctively and remained so until his head cleared, emerging from a dazed condition to acute consciousness. He was swift to take advantage of the slightest opening and could hit from any position with either hand. He fought

over three hundred and sixty fights, and when he died there was not a single professional scar upon his head and shoulders, such was the magnificence of his defense.

All the knuckles of his right hand, including the thumb, were smashed, and they, curiously enough, in his second fight with Jeffries at San Francisco in 1902. He had cut the California boy to ribbons, but he could not administer the knockout. He broke his four finger knuckles on Jeffries' jaw, one at a time, and the thumb for a finish.

"I felt them bust in my glove like pieces of chalk," he told me afterward. "No use. I then let go with my thumb at his temple. When it 'it 'im, the thumb went, too. It busted like a chocolate cream. I never struck another blow. I was through."

He was a brave and honest gentleman, full of fine impulses, generous and compassionate. He had the respect of the community, and although he died poor, he left no embarrassing obligations. He contracted four marriages during his lifetime. There was one son by his first wife, and three children—Bobby, Martin, and Rosie—by his second, Rose Julian Fitz-

simmons, whom he married in 1894. Rose died in 1904 and in 1905 Bob married Julia Gifford, a singer. After a few months they separated, and in 1915 Bob married Temo Ziller, an Italian woman, with whom he lived happily until his death on October 22, 1917.

He had a remarkable sense of humor and was constantly playing practical jokes on his acquaintances. He loved to sing old-fashioned church music to organ accompaniment; his voice was high, of the cracked tenor variety, but not without certain charm.

Down deep in his heart he was a thoroughly domestic man, fond of his children and anxious that they should conduct themselves properly in public. One day his son, Bobby, stood on a stepping stone on the Bath Beach residence and announced, in a loud voice, that he was the son of the "champion of the world." Bob went out and spanked the kid in public, after which he made this short, philosophical address:

"Don't get in the 'abit of sayin' that you are the son of the champion, because at any moment you may be called upon to stop talking about it. On the other 'and, don't go around telling

who you are unless somebody asks who you are."

This same Robert Junior grew up into a youth of magnificent physical proportions. He had his father's chest and shoulders, plus perfectly straight legs. In complexion and mannerisms he was a facsimile of the sire; he had the same blue eyes, the same forehead, and the same light, silken hair. He had his father's long and powerful arms, and their fists were exact duplicates. This resemblance, however, ended with the visible things. Out of the ring these men were replicas; in the ring there was a *perceptible* difference in favor of the father.

After the Fitzsimmons family moved to Dunellen, New Jersey, where Robert Junior grew up, Bob turned his barn into a boxing gymnasium and devoted himself to developing the young men of the neighborhood. Naturally, his pride was in his own son, who was a born boxer, fast as lightning, and a hard hitter. He learned every trick his father knew and added some stunts of his own invention. For exhibition purposes he was flawless.

One day, while visiting Bob on the Dunellen estate, I asked him about the boy.

From the Albert Davis Collection

Rose and Martin Julian in the early 90's, members of the Julian Family of acrobats who toured the United States. Martin became Fitzsimmons's manager and married Bob's divorced wife, after which ceremony Fitzsimmons promptly married Martin's sister Rose, by whom he had three children all living.

From the Albert Davis Collection

Victor and vanquished meet after many years at a charity exhibition where Kid McCoy was billed to box Fitz with Corbett as Referee. "The Kid" withdrew, however, and Gentleman Jim, doffing his silk hat, boxed a friendly bout with his conqueror. Tony Pastor, the old time theatrical man, wearing a straw hat stands behind Fitz. Joe Humphries, "The Voice of the People," also under straw, is shown on the right.

" 'E's fast. 'E can 'it 'ard. There's no man living can put a glove on 'im when 'e's at 'is best."

"How is he in the ring?"

Bob shook his head. "I don't know. 'E's never been in the ring. I don't even know if 'e can take a punch. There's a difference between boxing and actual fighting. I don't think I'm a good boxer, but when the gong sounds and the fight begins I'm at 'ome. I 'ate to train, but I like to fight. Come out in the barn and I'll put the gloves on with Bobby."

It was a marvelous exhibition. The younger at that time was six feet in height and weighed about one hundred and sixty-five pounds. Bob was one hundred and seventy-five. They used eight-ounce gloves.

Bobby walked up to the old man, feinted him into a knot, and stabbed him twice on the nose. Bob countered and missed. Bobby leaned back like a sunflower in a light zephyr. Without changing the position of his feet, and moving only from the upper part of his body forward, back, right, and left, he hit Robert Fitzsimmons, senior, ten times before the Antipodean finally got under cover. The son

blocked, sidestepped, ducked, and pulled every trick known in the ring. He was a master of the lightninglike tactics of Kid Griffo, than whom the ring has never known a shiftier boxer.

Bob tried every maneuver he knew on his own shadow, but without success. The boy laughed and played with his father. Emboldened by the presence of a spectator who had seen the great master win the championship of the world, Bobby began to get gay. All art has a frontier, a precise definition beyond which the artist encounters jeopardy. Bobby stepped across this barrier and received a wallop on the chin that enabled him to look down his own back. Before he had completely recovered Fitzsimmons *pere* slammed him on the ear with a left hook.

The boy threw up both hands in an effort to block what was coming, but failed to protect his mouth, upon which he was bashed twice with accuracy and fervor. Before he could get his hands down papa hit him a swat in the wind, whereupon the boy's entire ambition blew out of his nostrils. He stepped out of range, still holding both hands in front of his face, and peered at the old man between the gloves.

In spite of the expression of wonderment on his face, a bright idea suddenly came to him; at least, I thought it was a bright idea: He put the wrist of his right-hand glove to his teeth, untied the bowknot, performed the same office on the left glove, threw both mits on the floor, and left the barn at once, striding into the house and slamming the kitchen door loudly enough to knock most of the cooking utensils off the pantry shelves.

Father Fitzsimmons looked at me with an air of bewilderment, as though he had never seen the younger Fitzsimmons before, and let out a long sigh.

"Well, what do you know about that? 'E don't like it! 'E can't take it. I just barely tapped 'im. Too bad, ain't it? 'E'll 'ave to get over that—or *good-by!*"

In the distance we heard the front door slam and discovered young Robert strolling across the lawn, out the front gate, and off the premises. I saw Bob Junior several years later. In the meantime Bob Senior had died and Junior had succeeded in getting a few matches in and around New York. I recalled the episode in

the Dunellen barn and asked him why he had thrown the gloves off and walked out.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Bobby, with the kindliest look in his eye. "Sometimes I lose my temper and do things I afterward regret. Another thing, I don't think a man should hit his own father."

A highly commendable observation.

Perhaps this is a good place to insert further particulars concerning the second generation.

Martin, the second son, was an extremely bashful boy, utterly indifferent to athletic pastimes. For the prize ring he showed not the slightest interest. I question whether or no he ever saw a professional prize fight. He spent most of his youth in New Jersey, where he resided with his elder brother. He took several jobs but found it difficult to go through life as plain Martin Fitzsimmons instead of the son of Bob Fitzsimmons. He wanted to get on in the world not because he was the son of a champion but because he was himself. Not so easy. The blood of the warrior in Martin's veins ran smoother and calmer. He was not concerned in the cheers of the mob or the plaudits of the

sports. All he wanted was a fair chance to make a living and a quiet place to live. Finally, in sheer desperation, this peaceful member of the Fitzsimmons family enlisted in the Army. What an ironic escape from the clamorous civilians.

Early in 1925, when I was arranging for a tour around the world, I learned from Bob, Jr., that Martin was at the Schofield Barracks, twenty miles outside of Honolulu in the Hawaiian Islands. The elder Bob had confided in me years before that his second son lacked the combative qualities so necessary in the modern conflict for existence.

"Keep your eye on Martin," he said, "and if you ever run across him find out how he's getting along. He's a smart kid, and he's got the best disposition I ever knew. While nobody can run over him I don't think he likes prize fighting."

With this injunction fresh in my mind I went out to the Schofield Barracks, the most commodious in the world, and called on the officer in charge, explaining that I was carrying out a request that had been made of me many years ago.

"Very well, we will find Mr. Martin Fitzsimmons for you," said he.

I was turned over to a young lieutenant who escorted me to a bureau of registration. We found twenty-six Fitzsimmonses soldiering for Uncle Sam. There was one Martin Fitzsimmons driving a five-ton car in Motor Trust Company No. 43.

"You can just about catch him now. He's probably eating his lunch."

I was supplied with elaborate directions which led me through several miles of dormitories, training quarters, hospitals, blacksmith shops, etc., and came finally to a long wooden shack, in one corner of which the Son of Vulcan was supposed to be housed. Soldiers clad, partly clad and unclad, were sprawled around the place making the best of the intolerable heat. I announced my mission to the orderly.

"Fitzsimmons?" he said, searching his mind. "Martin Fitzsimmons? Lemme see. I think he's over in Dormitory No. 5. Ask that fellow coming along with the wheelbarrow.

"Hey, Bill, do you know a truck driver named Martin Fitzsimmons?"

"Naw! Here comes Jippy Connors, he will

know him. Oh, Jip, here's a guy wants to see you."

I passed along to Mr. Jip and asked him for the whereabouts of the lion tamer's cub.

"Aw, he's down over in that shack by the pineapple field. You can walk it in five minutes. Sure, I know him: Martin Fitzsimmons."

I trudged through an avenue of dust, crossed a muddy compound and found myself on a rickety veranda without a soul in sight. I rapped on the jam of the screen door hard by and, receiving no answer, peered inside. About two hundred sleeping cots over which hung dusty mosquito canopies were discernible in the gloom.

"Anybody in?"

Something moved and a tired-looking soldier thrust his head into the open.

"Ay, what do you want?"

"I'm looking for Martin Fitzsimmons."

"Come on in. You will find him on the back porch reading a book."

I passed through the silent dormitory with high hopes and came upon a young soldier in khaki seated in a wooden chair tipped against

the wall, his eyes glued in a book which afterward proved to be Robert Chambers' "Coniston." I addressed him with a casual "Hello, Martin!" He rose, placed the book in the chair and came toward me; a stocky youth about five feet nine, resembling in no particular any of the Fitzsimmons dynasty. Not until he spoke was there any suggestion of his inheritance.

"How do you do, sir. I'm afraid—"

I explained that I had called at the request of his father and described the difficulties I had encountered in locating him. Finally he recalled me.

"Don't these soldiers know you are Bob Fitzsimmons' son?" I asked.

"No! I have never made the slightest reference to it. There is no resemblance between my father and myself. Every man has got to stand on his own feet in the Army. Because a man is descended from a fighter doesn't mean that he *is* a fighter. I'm a motor truckman, that's all. If anybody knew I was a son of Bob Fitzsimmons they would naturally expect me to put on the gloves and in order to make good I'd have to lick a soldier about once a week or get

licked myself. Well, it doesn't look good to me."

"What do you do for amusement?" I asked.

"Oh, when I can find a book I read."

"Is there anything I can get you when I get back to Honolulu?"

"Yes, some books. I don't want any boxing gloves or sweaters or running trunks, just books and magazines. The truck gives me all the exercise I want and when I get back to the barracks and sit down to a good story I call it a day."

I visited with Motor Truckman Fitzsimmons for half an hour and talked about his sire. Here was the second generation in whom the blood of the battler no longer ran riot. The son of Mars had climbed into a motor truck, driven around the arena and stopped in front of a library. He wore khaki, the putties and the uniform of the Army, but he was not at war. The manly art had no claim upon him. It is safe to say, however, if a man's eyes reveal the depths of him Martin Fitzsimmons would not hesitate to climb up on his motor truck and "take the count" for his country.

Bob's crowning *bon mot* was born at midnight in the basement of the Bath Beach homestead, where Robert and the writer were preparing a midnight luncheon of fried eggs, a delicacy which appealed to both.

Mrs. Fitzsimmons was on the third floor with the children. Bob had dug up from the heart of the ice box two dozen fresh eggs. These he proceeded to break into a large frying pan, which he placed upon a single-wick coal-oil stove. Now, two dozen eggs in one frying pan is something fierce to behold, and only a juggler like Al Fields could handle them with safety.

Nevertheless the bold Robert set the pan over the single flame and stood back to watch results. He was wearing a pair of purple pongee silk pajamas so abbreviated that the color scheme was a full set of freckles with a purple heart. He stood with his arms on his hips scanning the cooking operations with much satisfaction. The writer was slicing bread and engaging in other noiseless pastimes pending the completion of the omelet.

To make a long story short, the eggs, being in a liquid state, slightly animated by the heat

of the oil burner, began to slip. The pan got off its balance, fell from the stove, struck handle down on the floor and with flawless accuracy slammed a twenty-four-egg omelet into Mr. Fitzsimmons' face, down the front of his pajamas, and over most of his freckles.

Being skilled in strategy, I blew out the candle, but the echoes of the falling frying pan reverberated through the basement, the kitchen, the ground floor, and up into the nursery. Almost immediately we heard ominous steps and the movement of a heavy body coming down the stairs. In due course a halo appeared at the entrance of the basement and was followed by the form of Mrs. Fitzsimmons dressed in a kimono. She held a candle above her head and viewed the wreckage.

A steady drip! drip! drip! from Bob's face and sleeping garments was the only sound that broke the stillness. Not being one of the principals in what was about to begin, I was hiding behind the ice box. Through the omelet Bob's blue eyes were blinking and the ghost of a smile was discernible through the slit that served as his mouth. Rose, graceful as the Statue of

Liberty, walked up to the champion and made the simple query:

"What are you doing?"

"I am making a h'mlet."

Whereupon Rose Julian Fitzsimmons invited me to come out from behind the ice box and observe something worth while. I emerged boldly, the sole spectator. Mrs. Fitzsimmons then slapped Robert sharply and accurately upon his egg-dipped right cheek exactly as she would have slapped a bad boy. The eggs splashed far and near.

Bob staggered, began to sink at the hips, placed his left hand upon his heart, his right across his eyes, and fell into the slippery embrace of twenty-four A1 fresh eggs apparently for the count. The wife and mother glanced at the vanquished one, turned on her heel, walked up the basement steps, and left us in total darkness. From the recumbent champion I heard a ripple of laughter.

"What's the joke?" I asked, longing for something with a laugh in it.

Bob made no reply, but only chortled the more. I found a match and lighted the candle.

Bob was sitting up in the omelet, holding his sides and shaking with laughter.

"What *is* the idea?" I entreated.

"Well, Rose thinks she can lick me!"

So far as I was concerned, she did, that night. I finally got a leg hold around the kitchen stove, passed Bob a long arm over the omelet limits and pulled him ashore. We took a shower in the basement and went to bed about one o'clock without any luncheon whatever.

At eight in the morning Mrs. Fitz sounded a clarion call for breakfast and we went to the finest repast ever served in Bath Beach. Not the slightest reference was made to the battle in the basement. Peace, good will on earth, and kindliness was the order of the day.

Part Eight

THE PASSING OF THE LEADVILLE BLACKSMITH

THERE was always a touch of humor in Bob's contact with the public. He seldom took himself seriously. On the way West we stopped one night in Leadville, Colorado, to pick up a few loose dollars that clamored for captivity. Mr. Shoemaker, with an eye for business, announced that any gentleman who volunteered to bout Mr. Fitzsimmons four rounds at the Town Hall would get a hundred dollars for each round he stayed, provided he was in the ring at the end of the fourth. Placards were displayed conspicuously, and Leadville was agog.

Along about three in the afternoon I hunted up a chair in the window of a local hostelry and sat me down to view the passing show. In a few moments a gentleman weighing two hundred and sixty pounds and about six feet four in height strolled in and asked if he could speak to me.

"Certainly. Sit down."

"You're with Fitzsimmons, I understand."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I see he has offered a hundred dollars a round to-night for anybody who stays four rounds."

He edged his chair up closer and inquired very deliberately:

"Any penalty for killing a man in the ring?"

I explained that if both men were in condition and the fight was without malice and that Queensberry rules prevailed death would be regarded as an accident.

"That's all I want to know," said he, after a moment's reflection. "I never hit a man yet as hard as I could, but to-night I'm going to let myself go."

"Who are you?" I inquired casually.

"Hell! Don't you know me? I'm the Leadville Blacksmith."

I seized his hand with fervor, apologized for not recognizing him, and told him to be around about eight o'clock; that Fitzsimmons would accommodate him.

"You understand, I ain't got nothin' against

Fitzsimmons, but I have friends here who expect me to show him something."

"Oh, perfectly."

He sauntered away with the grace of a thrashing machine.

The doctrine of "safety first" had not yet inoculated the nation, but I thought it my duty to explain to Bob that he was going to inherit something from a total stranger that night, and to be prepared. Bob's eyes twinkled.

" 'Ow big is he?"

"Six feet four."

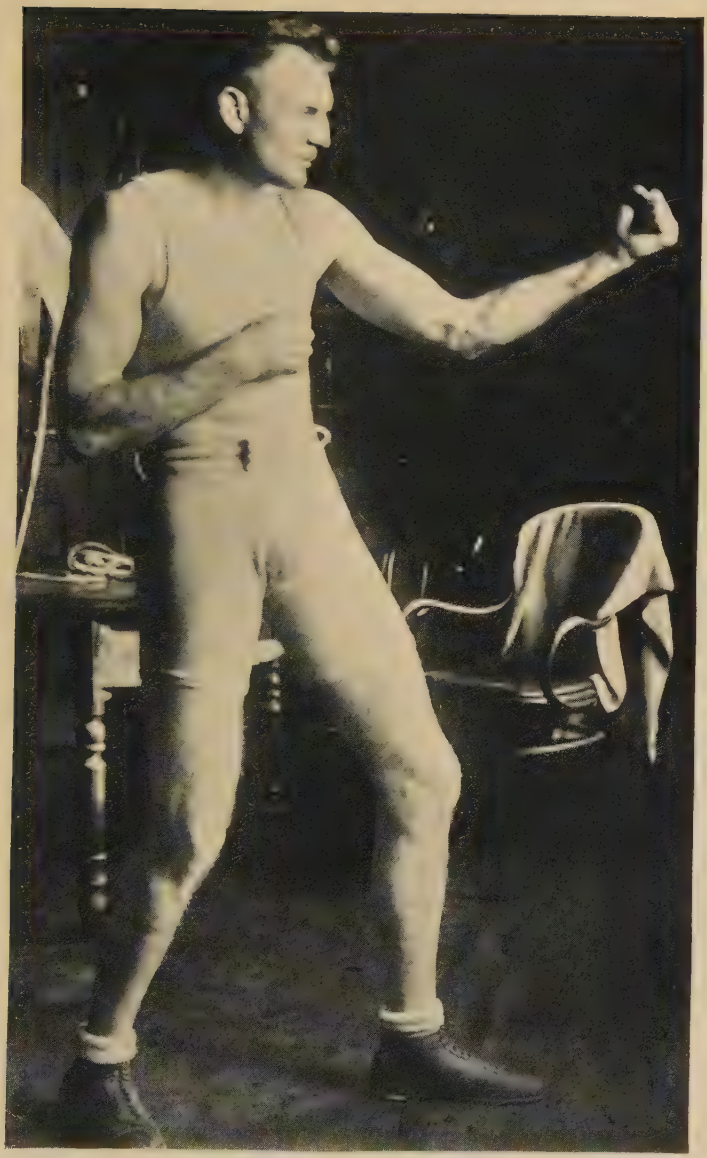
"What does he weigh?"

"Two hundred and sixty, a forty-eight chest passive measurement, fifty-four inflated, and is eight inches between the eyes. He's got hands as big as dress suit cases."

"Pie!" snorted Mr. Fitzsimmons.

Little did I know that on that fatal night I was to witness one of the most thrilling episodes in the history of Colorado.

The hall was low and narrow, probably thirty feet wide and eighty feet deep. Temporary benches had been thrown in, and an audience of miners, gamblers, Mexicans, and Chinese, with a slight leaven of the local gen-



From the Albert Davis Collection

Bob Fitzsimmons, Jr., the elder son of the champion, whom the senior Fitz regarded as the fastest and shiftiest boxer of his time. In spite of the boy's numerous victories among the preliminary contenders he seems to lack that inimitable fighting spirit that made the sire the marvel of the prize ring.

From the Albert Davis Collection

Julia Gifford, the concert hall favorite whom Fitzsimmons took as his third wife, soon after the death of Rose Julian. The romance of Julia and Robert was short lived although he seriously contemplated fighting a duel to win her back. The honeymoon was spent in Bath Beach and Dunnellen, New Jersey.

try, piled into the place and filled it to suffocation.

A young male brunette pianist, closely shaven, highly perfumed, and with a cowlick that swept clear across his forehead and up over his right ear, was pounding a square piano in violent discord. He was a master of the hurdy-gurdy, a virtuoso of every melody of the bagnio, the deadfall, and the panel game.

The "entertainers" got into the place through a back door and took seats on the stage. Stelzner and Roper wrestled a couple of rounds and Dan Hickey and Fitz did "some fancy," after which the great battler punched the bag, concluding with a wallop that detached the leather from its fastenings and sent it hurdling among the élite.

"And now, gentlemen," said Mr. Shoemaker, "if there be one among you, one who would like to box Mr. Fitzsimmons four rounds, he will receive the sum of one hundred dollars for each round he remains in the ring—up to four."

There was no response to this appeal. I searched in vain for the Leadville Blacksmith.

"Once again!" shouted Mr. Shoemaker, lifting his hand and peering among the audience. "If there is one among you, let him now come forth."

Suddenly, through the smoke screen at the far end of the hall, I observed the hulk of the smithy emerging from behind the stove. He came not as a lamb but as a lion. He ran down the center aisle to the "orchestra," stepped nimbly on the neck of the piano player, who was bending over his Rubenstein, crushed his face into the keys, and lit on the stage with a loud exclamation:

"Here!"

He was dressed in a pair of black tights, an old-fashioned red jersey which had burst in front, disclosing the dark, curly hair on his Vulcanlike chest. Under his arm he carried two sets of boxing gloves as big as pillows. He explained that he did not dare use a smaller glove on mortal man. Hickey reasoned with him and finally got out a pair of eight-ounce gloves that fitted the assassin. The piano player still lay among the keys weeping over his lost art.

A hostler arrived from some invisible quar-

ter with a ten-gallon bucket half full of water in which floated an enormous harness sponge. This was set on the left of the stage beside the chair in which the blacksmith took his seat. In the lower right-hand corner of the stage next to the footlights was one post but no ropes whatever. Evidently the arrangements for the exhibition had been made hurriedly. In the absence of a gong and after Dan Hickey explained to the principals that there was to be no hitting in the clinches or kicking or biting, "Time!" was called.

The blacksmith leaped from his corner like a wildcat, swinging both hands. Fitz made the gesture of a Spanish dancer and let him go by. He returned with energy and missed the Australian again. For the whole of the first round Bob occupied himself with keeping out of the way of his antagonist, never once putting a glove on him. It was a case of bull pursuing the matador.

Toward the close of the round the blacksmith, completely baffled at his failure to land on the visitor, stepped in and let a wild swing go which landed on the side of Bob's head and glanced off. Fitz dropped his hands and stag-

gered back as though hit with a brick. He simulated all the agonies of one about to die in public.

"Time!"

The Leadville scrapper was hauled back to his chair and forced to sit down. He was in a tremendous state of excitement. Before the next round he leaned down from his seat and made a few husky remarks to some gentlemen friends seated in the front row. Immediately the group became a grape-vine telephone of rumor and started the message through the audience. The blacksmith had said in substance that he would kill Fitz the next round and that any contemplated wagering should be hastened before the death scene. I never saw so much money change hands in thirty seconds. The odds were appalling and the confusion great.

"Time!"

Fitz got out of his chair, crossed the stage like a streak of light, feinted the blacksmith with his left twice, tied him in a knot, and then released an uppercut from the neighborhood of the floor. At the apex of the stroke Fitz lifted himself to the balls of his feet and threw

his entire weight into his crooked elbow. His fist met the solid ivory chin of the Colorado contestant at exactly the right moment. There was a sound as though some one had hit a cake of ice with a sledge hammer; a cracking, rending impact that reverberated throughout Leadville.

The blacksmith, lifted from the floor, described a parabola and did a nose dive into the bucket containing the harness sponge, his feet in the air.

It is a regrettable thing that words written or spoken cannot be accumulated and distributed with the same rapidity as thought. I cannot describe in one second what really occurred. You will have to read it deliberately and with a certain amount of reflection.

When the blacksmith's head hit the harness sponge, a geyser of water splashed out of the bucket and drenched him to the hips. When he lit he was unconscious, but the flood of water revived him, not wholly but enough to arouse the instinct of self-preservation. Vaguely there crept into his somewhat shattered intelligence that instead of being kicked by a mule he was drowning.

He lay in the flood of slimy water, cock-eyed and full of indecision to boot. In front of him the sole surviving post of the unfinished arena must have assumed the proportions of a lone spile in a restless sea. At all events the Leadville Blacksmith, valiant to the last, decided to swim ashore. He did the trudgeon, the overhand, and the old-fashioned breast stroke, covering as much as a foot and a half in eight or ten strokes. Failing to get anywhere by these methods, he carefully turned over on his back and tried to float, instead of which he began to sink.

His eyes were becoming glassier and glassier and his strokes feebler and feebler. Nevertheless he stuck to his aquatic sports and pastimes, turned over on his stomach again, and finally swam up to the spile, which he seized with renewed hope and pulled himself up on his feet. If the eyes are the portals of the soul the vacuity of the blacksmith's expression would indicate that there was nobody home in the temple. He stood there dripping wet struggling for utterance. At last the words came haltingly:

"Gentlemen . . . having licked this big

freckled bum," he waved his hand somewhere behind him, "I now challenge . . . anybody in—the world."

This defy threw the house into a convulsion. Bob crossed the stage and placed his hand on the blacksmith's shoulder:

"What's that?"

The blacksmith turned, looked at Bob steadily for perhaps ten seconds, threw up both hands and fell absolutely unconscious at Fitzsimmons' feet. He got three knockouts. The first on the jaw, the second when his head hit the bucket, and the third when he discovered that Fitz had come back to life.

Four sturdy young smithies picked up the person of the Leadville farrier and carried him to a near-by hotel, where he was placed on a billiard table. Every known device for reviving a man who was both soaked and socked was called into play. Presently a waiter announced that a little vinegar poured up the nose of a gentleman who was enjoying a coma might have some satisfying results. Well, it did. The blacksmith came to with a loud explosion, sprayed a shower of vinegar over the watchers at the billiard table, and sat up. He

then swept the emergency fleet from its moorings and stalked out into the wide-open spaces under the waiting stars.

We gladiators retired satisfied that the grim specter of death was not to stalk abroad that night.

Toward morning I was aroused from my slumbers by a gentle tapping on my chamber door. I got up to reconnoiter. At the threshold stood a squat bullet-headed party wearing a somber derby pulled down so tightly over his receding brow that nothing but a stove-lid lifter could have removed it. I did not invite him in, because Fitz was asleep in the adjoining room. Come out in the hall and listen to this dialogue:

"What can I do for you?"

"Where's Fitz?"

"Asleep."

"Did you see that sock that he hit the blacksmith?"

"Yes, sir. What about it?"

"Well, I'm the blacksmith's manager, and me and him's got a bet."

Something had begun to stir across the threshold.

"What is the bet?"

"I bets the blacksmith a ten spot that Fitz had a horseshoe in his glove."

"You lose," I responded, laughing inordinately.

At that moment Fitz opened the door and injected his bald head into the dimly lighted hallway.

"Ask him!" urged the manager, his face illuminated with hope.

Hastily I explained the situation.

"What I hit him with," said Bob, holding up his right hand, "was this. You owe the gentleman ten dollars."

Out of the shadows further down the hall came the blacksmith himself in person. A large red bandanna handkerchief was knotted behind his right ear, covered the left side of his cheek and chin. In it reposed a small chuck steak, which at that time was popularly supposed to be an antidote against black and blue souvenirs. The right eye in sympathy with the impact of the wallop was almost closed, and there was a dark discoloration from his nostrils clear down to his shoulder blades.

"Give me that ten spot," he demanded of the gentleman with the black derby, "and give it to me quick. So far I ain't got nothing out of this fight. I want to tell you something else, kid. I'm going back in the mines to shoe mules, where I belong, and if anybody catches me roaming around in the daylight on the surface of this earth within the next five years you tell me about it. Good-night, Mr. Fitzsimmons, you done a plenty to me."

Arm in arm the village blacksmith and his managerial pigmy ambled away in the darkness.

Part Nine

CLEARING UP THE GREAT BATH BEACH MYSTERY

IT seems to me perfectly reasonable that in these recollections I should shed some light upon "The Great Bath Beach Mystery," dating back some twenty years, which became articulate and flew howling up to Manhattan on the wings of rumor.

I did not realize at the time of its occurrence the fullness of its baneful influence upon the reputation of my friend, otherwise I should have scotched it then. Time has the power to fix and to harden pigments of gossip into permanent form. This is particularly true with reference to all professional people.

Often one hears of the celebrated writer who works under the influence of drugs; of the dancer who goes on the stage drunk and flings a terpsichorean triumph to lie dormant until the next night; of the great singer who lives countless love duets but sings incom-

parable solos; of some frail genius who is revered by the whole world for his kindly attributes, but who explodes in private and smashes the furniture; of some reformer with one eye on the Decalogue and another on the Decameron. Such is the penalty of fame. In Fitzsimmons' own words: "The higher they come the harder they fall."

This is mere preamble to the story which follows, told for the first time in print. I have the sincere hope that it will, at some future day, assume historical importance and be accepted as the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

It broke out of a clear sky and had its genesis in a mysterious telephone message which I received from Super's hotel, Bath Beach, one hot August night about ten o'clock.

"Who's speaking?" I asked.

"A friend of Bob Fitzsimmons!"

"Command me."

"I got suthin' to tell you. Can you hear me? . . . The old bird's up against it."

"Broke?"

"No, nothing like that."

"Well?"

"Stewed. Pied to the lids."

"Sorry, but he'll get over that. What do you want *me* to do?"

"Say, listen. This is worse than you think it is."

"Spill it."

"He's locked himself in the house and won't see anybody. He says he's training a parrot to talk."

"Well, he's got a right to train a parrot to talk, hasn't he?"

"Listen some more. They ain't no parrot there. He's got delirium tremens. You're his friend. You can take it or leave it."

"What's your name?"

"Ne'mind. This is up to YOU."

Silence. What was there to say? From out of the darkness had come the warning cry. An S O S that no man may disregard and not have restless nights.

I turned to my devoted wife and informed her that a friend was in trouble . . . that I must go to him . . . that I would explain everything when I returned. I said calmly:

"Don't ask me anything. Every minute is precious."

She strangled an impulse to go into details. I hushed her.

"When will you be home?"

"Perhaps not until . . . to-morrow morning. Don't worry."

I caught an elevated train for Bath Beach at Brooklyn Bridge. I detrained at Twenty-second Avenue, arriving at the portals of the Fitzsimmons home about midnight. There was so sign that the occupant was in a disorderly state of mind, no outward guarantees that the demon delirium was raging within. I stood at the gate cogitating the situation. Had I been hoaxed; was it a Joe Miller alarm?

In the midst of my reflections a distant rumble of thunder and a display of heat lightning roused me to make some decision. A vagrant wind-drifted cloud sprayed me lightly. The trees overhead baptized me with gentle aftermath. Any person standing around Twenty-second Avenue in Bath Beach at midnight during a thunder shower garbed in a straw hat and a pongee suit would have been an imbecile not to do something definite.

The lightning throbbed again. I got a flash

of myself in the glass panel of the front door, a ghost-like solitary figure stalling for time.

Courage, Rollo. I strode down the path, up the wooden steps, and rapped three times with my damp knuckles. After an interminable silence I struck again. Something stirred within. The echo of shuffling feet reached my ears faintly. A hand was laid upon the inner door knob. The lights went on. A voice:

"'Oo's there?"

At least he was able to speak. What relief. The voice was unmistakably his. And sober.

"Bob," I answered.

"Bob 'oo? They ain't but one Bob and he's on the hinside."

This sort of repudiation I was in no mood to receive. The retort that would come naturally to one's lips under similar circumstances died a-bornin'.

I turned to retrace my steps and was half way back to the gate when the door was opened violently and Ruby Robert, clad in an old-fashioned single-piece muslin nightgown, leaped toward me with a burst of cordiality.

"H'I was only kidding. Come on in. Ain't this a 'elluva night?"

With that he picked me up in his arms as though I were a mere child and carried me into the house, closing the door gently.

I made a swift appraisal of his general condition, the pupils of his eyes and his demeanor. The mysterious message that had come to me earlier in the evening did not seem to be reasonable. The only thing that struck me as rather curious was that Bob seemed to be occupying the entire ground floor.

From the main sitting room there was a vista that passed through the adjoining rectangle and terminated into what was apparently a bedroom.

"Why didn't you phone me you were coming down?"

That question was a facer. I didn't dare tell him I was down there to rescue him from a drunkard's grave, nor was there the slightest indication that he had had a drink for months. Regardless of the fact that I was without a grip or even a toothbrush I remarked lightly that I was lonesome and needed companionship.

" 'Ere's the place to find it," said Bob with a broad grin. "I've got a friend with me.

Come and see 'im. Rose is down to Rye Beach with the kids."

He snapped off the light in the parlor and we went on through to the bedroom, which was in semi-darkness, illuminated only by the light that filtered in from a street lamp on the corner.

"Stand right where you are and don't move."

Bob strode across the room, the skirts of his night robe flapping around his thin legs. He touched a button. A flood of blinding light filled the boudoir. I'll never forget the spectacle that confronted me. There stood Fitz in his disheveled nocturnal robes. His thin, damp hair lay in disarray on his forehead.

On the bed nearest the door was a plate of bananas, plums, and soda crackers. On the other side of the room, on the foot rail of the brass bed, sat a large multicolored macaw. The tail feathers were white and red and blue, the breast green and yellow, the head surmounted by a mixture of jade hues. This bird had claws like a tiger and a beak like a pair of ice tongs. Its red-rimmed eyes, re-

adjusting themselves to the white light, dilated and contracted as the pale lids rose and fell over the glistening orbs.

"Where did you get the comic supplement?" I inquired.

"That's a macaw," said Bob in a hurt tone of voice. "I'm teaching 'im to talk."

"What can he say?"

As if in response to this direct question Bob's pet let out a squawk that seemed to come from the pit of the infernal regions.

"'E hasn't learned much yet," said Bob, "and 'e don't like to work at night."

"Is he a good feeder?" I queried, with an eye on the fruit.

"Watch him."

Bob peeled a large over-ripe banana and handed it to the macaw, following with a couple of plums, which he lost no time consuming. The crackers were declined.

In an incredibly short interval the bird began to show signs of distress. The plum juice drouled from his beak and dripped on the floor. In the interest of good housekeeping Bob placed an evening newspaper where it would do the most good. In spite of the

fact that the bird had not yet learned to talk he was evidently able to read. He scanned the headlines, turned around, and tossed half his lunch *on the bed.*

"He never did that before," remarked his backer and trainer, seizing the paper and placing it *on the bed.*

One never knows what a macaw will do in action. So far as that bird was concerned, he lost no time in reversing himself and coughed the rest of his chow *on the floor.*

"What's the use," commented Mr. Fitzsimmons, laying another journalistic doily; "I think the storm has upset 'im."

A salvo of thunder came galloping up from Atlantic Highlands, while a fanfare of heat lightning flashed through the treetops leaping northward. The playfulness of the elements was having a distressing influence upon all hands.

"And 'e don't like strangers," added Bob, "but 'e likes me."

He stroked the glistening opal back of the ill macaw and tenderly ruffled the feathers on its breast. Even over this bird, as with all dumb animals, he was able to exercise a quiet-

ing influence; at least for the moment. The night was yet young.

I apologized for arousing Bob from his slumbers and began making excuses to get back to New York.

"Nothing like that. You stay. I think this bird is through bein' sick."

"No, Bob, I don't like to sleep with macaws."

"Well, I'll sleep in the room with the parrot. You go in on the lounge. I'll take the bedclothes off the other bunk and make up a shakedown in the parlor. It's going to rain all night anyhow. To-morrow morning maybe the macaw will begin to talk."

Nothing else would do. I accepted the hospitalities and retired to the parlor. For purposes of ventilation Bob pulled out into the middle of the room the bed upon which the macaw was parked, turned the light out, and threw himself down with his feet toward the visitor.

Down the vista from the parlor into Bob's bedroom during the flashes of tremulous heat lightning, sometimes of long duration, I could see not only the bird of evil perched on the

brass rail but Ruby Robert from the waist down. All my efforts to court slumber were in vain. The night grew hotter and hotter. Bob got up, discarded his nightgown, and threw himself back again upon the moist sheets.

The lightning increased in intensity, flashing with great frequency. I observed through half closed eyes that the macaw was making a close study of the recumbent scrapper. Every moment or two he would lift the right or the left foot from its perch, close and open his claws, and click his ice tongs. The green feathers upon his neck began to ruffle, the tail flared out like a vast fan, the eyes glittered. He was still brooding over the tainted banana and the overripe plums. Robert, oblivious to all surroundings, snored fitfully.

Prescience is not my long suit, but I am a good guesser. I had a hunch that something in the line of action was about to begin. I sat up on the couch to await developments. Finally, as though all the furnace doors of Tophet had been opened, all the lightnings of heaven blossomed in this conflict of brilliance. A thunderous clap rent the heavens. The

macaw shook out his plumage, sounded a shrill battle call, stepped off the brass foot rail, and jumped on the slumbering Mr. Fitzsimmons. He sank his massive curved talons into Bob's flanks and began to whang him on the kidneys with his beak.

The sky exploded and a torrent of rain crashed through the suburbs.

Regardless of the fact that Bob was the fastest thinker I ever saw in the ring, the murderous assault of the macaw found him wholly unprepared. He was evidently deep in the swamps of sleep, but with an alacrity I have never witnessed before or since Robert Prometheus Fitzsimmons leaped from his bed and made a dive for a screen door opening on the garden, through which he passed with the grace of Annette Kellerman. He landed on his face in a bed of sodden mignonette, sweet William, and pansies. The macaw stayed with him, pounding his kidneys to a fair-ye-well. Every blow struck was a foul.

I dashed to the aperture through which the tortured Bob and the challenger had passed. Fitz rose from the mud and began to claw at his tormentor, inaccessible, more or less, owing

to the fact that he was making his best attack from the rear. Amid the claps of thunder I caught the fragments of a wild exclamation which sounded very much like:

"I'm on fire. Put me out."

Bob dashed up and down the flower bed three times, and on the third lap I leaned out and seized the macaw by the tail feathers, most of which came away to a crescendo of wild squawks. On the fourth trip I caught the parrot around the breast and neck and tore him from his fastenings. He struck at me with unprofessional fury. I retaliated by throwing him behind me on the floor.

My next imitation was to pull Bob into the room. He was covered with mud and in a thoroughly bad humor. The macaw, still harboring his old grudge, made a dive at Bob's legs. On a chair near the window were two electric light bulbs, which Bob seized and hurled at his antagonist. The first struck the bird in the neck and fell to the floor intact. The second bulb missed its goal, hit the wall, and busted with the report of a cannon. Windows began to go up around the neighborhood, and harsh words were substituted for

the thunders that went muttering away seaward.

By this time the macaw, somewhat groggy, had climbed on the bed. With an effort at reconciliation, and in keeping with his policy of fairness, Bob reached out to stroke the bird and call the fight a draw.

Nothing doing. The macaw bit two fingers nearly off the hand that fed him. The battle was on again. I separated the contestants, kicked the parrot into a closet, and shoved Bob into a bathroom.

While Fitz was laving his person I decided, on general principles, to kill the macaw, and cautiously opened the closet door. There on the floor sat the bird teetering to and fro, picking his beak with his own claws. For all I know, fragments of Robert Fitzsimmons may have been clinging to them. The fighting instinct was dead. I closed my hand over the folded wings of the sodden mass, opened the window, and threw Mr. Robert Fitzsimmons' attack of delirium tremens into the moist night. He fluttered through the trees, glinting with what few glints he had left, and disappeared forever.

When I returned to the bathroom Bob was standing in front of a pier mirror acting like a contortionist in an effort to count the numerous wounds on his mutilated body. There were nine punctures over the left kidney and several sets of scratches down his thighs. In that scrap he received more wounds than he had received during the entire history of his pugilistic career.

"Think of him doing that after me trying to teach him to talk."

"What did you want him to talk about?" I inquired.

"Oh, 'ell! Let's go back to bed."

Exhausted, each of us went to our separate couches. The storm passed, the heat lightning died, and a calm settled over the estate. I lay there contemplating the immutability of man, when down through the vista came a voice:

"'Ay, are you asleep?"

"Why?"

"I've just been thinking."

"Thinking what?"

After an interminable delay, Bob replied:

"That it's a good thing Rose isn't 'ere."

The rest was silence.

Part Ten

BOB'S HOME LIFE AND HIS RARE SENSE OF HUMOR

UNQUESTIONABLY the individual who had the most influence on Robert's career was Rose, his second wife, the sister of Martin Julian. She was well aware that Bob would go through the world more or less indifferent to the conventions. She knew him to be a man of keen exuberance actuated by whimsical impulses, many of which seemed almost childish. He had a mania for elaborate display at his dinner table. All the silver, glassware and paraphernalia of gastronomic ceremony were required before he sat down to feast. The children were required to be in their places at regular hours, and no nibbling between meals. The soup tureen was silver and carried a colossal ladle which Bob handled with philosophical observations to the group of youngsters.

On one occasion I was present at a birthday dinner which he gave himself. As a matter

of fact I was the only outsider and sat on the champion's right. The soup course was a gorgeous affair—a clear consommé in which floated alphabetical noodles.

"Now, children," said the king of the uppercut to the three gaping youngsters, Bobby, Martin and Rosalie, "this soup is h'educational and contains the entire h'alphabet. You ain't supposed to try and pick your name out of every spoonful, but give it a look anyway, you might learn something."

The massive ladle swung in graceful curves to the soup tureen and the steaming college course went the rounds of the table, served by a butler whose business it was to rub Bob down between meals and take a few wallops on the jaw for lunch.

"I want you kids," he continued as the meal progressed, "to learn table manners. The less noise you make when h'eating the better people will like it. And you, Martin, when you get through with the spoon take it out of your mouth. Don't try to bite it. Look at your sister Rosalie. She eats like a lady."

All things being considered, the festal board of the Fitzsimmons family was not without its

graces. When the children retired they were obliged to make a genuflection and ask to be excused.

The redoubtable Bob believed in a varied menu and liberal portions. At the conclusion of the particular birthday party to which I refer six apple dumplings were brought in by the ex-trainer and set before the king. A large bowl of orange sauce was placed on Bob's immediate right. The dumplings were served and deluged with the succulent orange treacle.

"Now, my friends," said Bob, with a boyish smile on his face, "when I count three everybody breaks his dumpling:

"One!

"Two!

"Three!

Six forks disappeared, the full length of their tines and the brown crust caved in.

"Ah!"

"Oh!"

"Gee!"

"Papa!"

"Oh, Bob!"

Belasco could not have done better. In place

of apples the dumplings contained gifts from "Ruby Robert" to himself, to his family and his guest. The three children received napkin rings suitably engraved. Mrs. Fitzsimmons' dumpling contained an amethyst breast pin and a pair of earrings.

Me? Igotawatchfob.

Robert handed himself a diamond ring, which a few days afterward in a fit of generosity he presented to his butler.

The Fitzsimmons household possessed everything that went to make a place livable, and regardless of the fact that the prize ring was the chief topic of conversation in Bob's professional life he never talked shop at the table, where the formalities and rituals of home life went forward on an even keel.

About the only thing Bob could not handle gracefully was a roast turkey. He began by carving and ended by slugging it. He knew how to find the point of a man's jaw, but he couldn't find the joint of a gobbler's wing. He got so that he wasn't allowed to use a carving knife except on steak that had been boned. Even a genius must necessarily have his limitations.

The most extraordinary dinner I ever attended under Bob's roof I arranged to celebrate his marriage to Julia Gifford in 1905. The wedding took place out West while Bob was traveling with his theatrical troupe. A few days afterward I received this telegram:

> Please arrange to open my Bath Beach House. I'm bringing my bride home. Invite some of the sporting editors and have Super's Hotel serve a dinner. You don't know what happiness is.
>
> Bob Fitz.

Here was a commission that could not be ignored and so I opened the house, which was already completely furnished, and made all necessary arrangements with a lavish hand. Invitations were issued principally to the gentry of the press with a smattering of kindly neighbors and a few old-time pals and backers associated with Bob's past triumphs. Lanterns were hung on the trees. A streamer of red carpet unrolled across the veranda down the staircase and out on the curb. The couple were due to arrive about eight o'clock. It

seemed to me as though nothing could be improved. Dan Hickey and I stood in the main vestibule and inspected the layout.

Seven-thirty P.M. All set. The guests were beginning to arrive. Once again I scanned the scene. It seemed impossible that anything could go wrong.

HALT! BEWARE!

Immediately over the grand piano which occupied the further end of the main hallway my eye fell upon a dark panel about five feet in height and three feet in width. Instantly it flashed upon me that that seemingly harmless rectangle deserved careful consideration and a swift decision. Beyond its glassy surface was a cluster of electric lights all of which, operated by a push button located at the main entrance of the vestibule, could be made to burst into flame, the object being to illuminate a gorgeous photographic transparency of the late Rose Julian garbed in tights and spangles of the acrobatic rôle, which she played throughout the United States in the latter eighties as one of the Julian family. It was truly a magnificent woman and no more symmetrical or stunning creature ever ap-

peared on the theatrical circuit. She was in the flower of her girlhood; now embalmed in the memory of the champion.

A cold chill ran through me. I turned to Mr. Hickey, who seemed to share my fears.

"Dan, do you suppose Bob would have the nerve when he enters the front door to push the button on that picture?"

"Surest thing you know," said Dan, "and if he does it will raise the devil. What will we do?"

7.45 P.M.

There was only one thing to do and I decided to do it. The electric plug controlling this object of art was in the basement into which I dove immediately, instructing Dan before I departed to press the button and light up the lady. It took me nearly a quarter of an hour to find the plug, the withdrawal of which would plunge the beautiful Rose Julian into temporary darkness. I found it at last.

"That's the one," bawled Dan over the banisters. "She's out to-night anyhow. Come on up."

I emerged from the basement just as Bob

stepped from his carriage and led the new bride up the steps into the house. A salvo of applause greeted the couple. Bob gently urged the bride forward into the vestibule and then—you can believe it or not—he reached out and pressed the button. *There was no illumination.* An expression of pain pranced across his face, but before he could recover Mr. Hickey and myself, with strong hands and much acclaim, forced him into the drawing-room.

"Don't be a sucker," Dan hissed in his ear. "Do you want to put this reception on the bum?"

"Wait a minute, Dan," said Bob, his eyes still fixed on the dark frame which failed for the first time to respond to his magic touch.

"Wait nothing. Here comes the bride," shouted the faithful old trainer, breaking the tension and at least for the moment the introduction of a tragic tableau.

We both felt that the danger line had been crossed and that Bob would, in the flow of good cheer, forget the gallant idea with which he was possessed as he reëntered his old home.

A battery of waiters served the dinner with-

out delay, Bob and his bride occupying the head of the table. Mr. Hickey seemed to have lost his appetite however.

As the evening wore on and mirth multiplied we relaxed our vigilance. The guests mingled in joy and accord throughout the brilliantly illuminated homestead. The bride, to her own accompaniment, sang several of the songs that had helped to contribute to her celebrity as an artist. Everybody made a friendly speech. Sporting writers sang the praises of the great Antipodean and the witching hour merged with the welkin. The staff of trained servitors rendered continuous symphonies of popping corks with bubbling choruses. The sighs of Seltzer wedding with golden distillations were enjoyed by all.

About 2:00 A.M. some one had the decency to observe that Mr. Fitzsimmons had disappeared. We thought perhaps he had gone out on the lawn to cool his fevered brow or perhaps—he had done it before—retired to get himself some sleep. A few still rational guests, Mr. Hickey and myself among others, formed quietly into small groups and went on Robert's trail. Insofar as his absence had not been observed by the majority of the guests no con-

fusion ensued. With the hope of keeping the procession of gayety in motion I induced the new Mrs. Fitzsimmons to sing another song which I announced in a loud voice.

The guests reassembled on the ground floor and the singer resumed her seat at the piano. She was very gracious and in excellent humor. Lightly she played the introduction of her next number. Before she had gotten well into the first bar *every light in the house went out.*

Mr. Hickey, leaning nonchalantly against Nero, the stuffed lion which was Bob's pet in the living, uttered a low moan and sank to the floor. An appalling silence ensued, broken by mild exclamations of surprise. From the basement came echoes suggesting that somebody was falling over all the stored furniture in Bath Beach. A gentleman, whose name I have never been able to learn, said in a loud voice:

"Call me at seven o'clock!" and began to snore.

Meanwhile from below a lost soul emitted exclamations of a more or less violent sort, and in due course somebody floundered up the stairs, picked his way through the guests and pressed the electric switch at the entrance of

the front door. Instantly there appeared in the panel over the piano in all its exquisite coloring the figure of Rose Julian, livelier, prettier and more entrancing than the Venus de Milo.

Mr. Hickey, still stretched on the Turkish rug, rose on his elbow, took one look at the vision of loveliness and fell back for the count. Everything was excitement. Mrs. Fitzsimmons, with her hands still on the keyboard, seemed completely overpowered. The ex-champion of the world, quite disheveled but obviously satisfied, waved his hand at the picture and in a clear voice introduced:

"Rose Fitzsimmons!"

He pressed the button again and plunged the scene into darkness. In the Stygian black I crossed to the recumbent Dan Hickey, kicked him twice and roused him from his lethargy. We found our way to the basement stairway, readjusted the plugs and untangled the social scenery. Ruby Robert, with an air of one who had done his full duty to the memory of a loved one, returned to the banquet hall cajoling the bride in transit. Be it recorded to her credit

that she accepted the whole proceeding with infinite grace.

The festivities were resumed and before the guests took their departure a genial atmosphere of complete understanding, aye, even admiration for the interlude, hovered over all.

About 3:00 A.M. the kerridges began to arrive and as I drove away in a sea-going hack I caught a glimpse of Bob and Julie standing in the wide-open door, the light from within throwing their united shadows across Twenty-second Avenue. Behind them dark, but no longer sinister, gleamed the cold panel that contained the image of the mother of his children.

Bob and his new bride were not together for long. His heart and his life and his soul was Rose and all that came to him apart from her was mere glamor.

Teno Ziller, whom he married in 1915, brought a certain quiet and consolation to his declining years, but Rose was his flame and his existence.

I reserve for conclusion a story that in my mind invests both Bob and Rose with a name-

less distinction. It is the one episode by which I prefer to remember them both.

On the morning of the Carson fight Mrs. Fitzsimmons retired to her bedroom and closed the door. Bob seemed to have the feeling that something of tremendous significance was afoot. He disappeared into the hall leading to her chamber. Almost immediately he reappeared and beckoned me to follow him on tiptoe. Reluctantly I complied. We could hear distinctly her slow, deliberate speech through the thin partition. The wife was on her knees praying, not for the defeat of Corbett but for her husband's victory.

I pulled Robert away from the door and got him back into the sitting room. The echoes of his wife's supplication reached us even there. Bob's chin was trembling, and he was quite inarticulate. I suggested that it might not be a bad idea for him to add his prayers to the Most High.

"No," he said thickly. "What's the use? If 'E won't do it for 'er, 'E won't do it for me."

THE END

The Inside Story of a World Champion

"RUBY ROBERT"

Alias

BOB FITZSIMMONS

By

ROBERT H. DAVIS

Editor of "Munsey's Magazine"

With an Introduction By W. O. McGEEHAN

Sports Editor of "The New York Herald-Tribune

¶ The intimate story of "Ruby Robert," renowned Australian prize-fighter, conqueror of Corbett.

¶ Full of whimsical anecdotes and unusual fact, this is the fascinating record of the long friendship of two strongly opposed personalities. Davis, a green newspaper reporter, met Fitzsimmons just before the great bout at Carson City, Nevada. It proved to be the famous editor's first scoop. It was the fighter's greatest battle. With this memory as a starting point Mr. Davis contributes a highly original, piquant chapter to American biography.

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